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THE

CHURCH IN THE CATACOMBS:

A DESCRIPTION OF THE

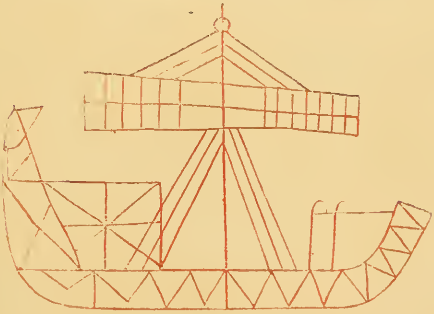
PRIMITIVE CHURCH OF ROME

ILLUSTRATED BY ITS

Sepulchral Remains.

BY

CHARLES MAITLAND, M.D.



Ἡ *ναῦς οὐρανοδρομοῦσα.* Clemens Alex. pæd. lib. iii.
See p. 216.

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TO

THE REV. EDWARD CRAVEN HAWTREY, D.D.

HEAD MASTER OF ETON COLLEGE,

AS A SMALL TOKEN OF RESPECT AND ESTEEM,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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THE

CHURCH IN THE CATACOMBS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"Sub Româ Romam quærito." —*Aringhi.*

The subterranean galleries which penetrate the soil surrounding the city of Rome, after having for four centuries served as a refuge and a sanctuary to the ancient Church, were nearly lost sight of during the disorder occasioned by barbarian invasions. As the knowledge of their windings could be preserved only by constant use, the principal entrances alone remained accessible; and even these were gradually neglected and blocked up by rubbish, with the exception of two or three, which were still resorted to, and decorated afresh from time to time. In the sixteenth century, the whole range of catacombs was re-opened, and the entire contents, which had remained absolutely untouched during more than a thousand years, were restored to the world at a time when the recent revival of letters enabled the learned to profit by the discovery. From that time to the present, Romanist writers have been suffered to claim identity in discipline and doctrine with the church that occupied the catacombs; while an attempt has scarcely been made to show from these remains the more striking resemblance existing between our Reformed Church and that of primitive Rome.

It is difficult now to realise the impression which must have been made upon the first explorers of this subterranean city. A vast necropolis, rich in the bones of saints and martyrs; a stupendous testimony to the truth of Christian history, and, consequently, to that of Christianity itself; a faithful record of the trials of a persecuted Church;—such were the objects presented to their view: and so great was the enthusiasm with which they devoted themselves to the research, that two of the earliest writers on the Catacombs of Rome, Bosio and Boldetti, occupied thirty years each in collecting materials for their respective works, which in both instances remained to be edited by their survivors.

When we consider the importance attached to relics by the Church of Rome, we shall not be surprised to find that the heads of her antiquarians were fairly turned by their discoveries. In the first transports of joy, Rome boasted that her cemeteries contained as many trophies as epitaphs, as many martyrs as sepulchres:—

"Tot ibi trophæa, quot ossa;
Quot martyres, tot triumphi:
Immo, tot palmæ, tot coronæ,
Quot tituli, quot tumuli."*

And, without departing from historical truth, there was enough to excite enthusiasm. Scattered throughout the gloomy corridors, countless martyrs "lay in glory, every one in his own house." Here had stood Stephen, when the sword of the impious abruptly cut short his episcopal benediction: here had crouched Liberius, content to worship the Trinity in darkness and privation: and here had mingled the blood of bishop and deacon, when Xystus and Quartus fell side by side.

We must now have recourse to the museums of Rome and the works of antiquarians, to understand the appearance of the Catacombs at that time. From the removal of every thing portable to a place of greater security and more easy access, as well as from the difficulty of personally examining these dangerous galleries, beyond the mere entrance left open to general inspection, we are no longer able to share the feelings of those who beheld the cemeteries and chapels of a past age completely furnished with their proper contents.

St. Jerome has left us a lively picture of their state during the early part of his lifetime, that is, about the middle of the fourth century. "When I was at Rome," says the monk of Bethlehem, "still a youth, and employed in literary pursuits, I was accustomed, in company with others of my own age, and actuated by the same feelings, to visit on Sundays the sepulchres of the apostles and martyrs; and often to go down into the crypts dug in the heart of the earth, where the walls on either side are lined with the dead; and so intense is the darkness, that we almost realise the words of the prophet, 'They go down alive into hell' (or Hades), and here and there a scanty aperture, ill deserving the name of window, admits scarcely light enough to mitigate the gloom which reigns below: and as we advance through the shades with cautious steps, we are forcibly reminded of the words of Virgil, 'Horror on all sides; even the silence terrifies the mind.'"*

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* Aringhi, epitaph of Roma Subterranea.

The history of the catacombs, since their recovery from the oblivion in which they had remained during the middle ages, consists principally in a succession of controversies, provoked by the indiscriminate veneration paid to every object found in them. During the pontificate of Sixtus the Fifth, that is, about the year 1590, some discussion having occurred respecting relics, the attention of antiquarians was strongly directed to the subject, and a diligent examination of the catacombs, then recently discovered, was undertaken. Foremost in this investigation was Bosio, whose posthumous work appeared in 1632, under the title of *Roma Sotterranea.* The same work translated into Latin , and much enlarged, was afterwards republished by Aringhi.*

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* Hieronymus in Ezechiel, c. xl.

A number of epitaphs were published by Fabretti, who was invested with the office of Curator of the Catacombs; and eighteen years afterwards another folio issued from the hands of his successor, Boldetti, intitled "Osservazioni sopra i cimiterii dei Santi Martiri." This work abounds in theological and antiquarian information, while the next that appeared, the "Sculture e Pitture" of Bottari, was devoted more especially to the Christian arts. The subject now became almost exhausted, not from the completeness of the knowledge obtained, but from the condition of the catacombs themselves, which by that time had been robbed of their most valuable contents to adorn the museums of Europe. Yet the great Mabillon still found enough to examine below ground: and D'Agincourt, whose visit to Rome, intended to occupy a few months, expanded into fifty years, spent a large proportion of that time in the catacombs, and left his unfinished work to be published by his friends. And an immense collection of inscriptions, brought to light since the days of Bottari and Mabillon, still invites the pen and pencil of the antiquarian: the most remarkable of these, now published for the first time, form a large portion of the original matter contained in this volume.

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* Aringhi happens to be better known in this country than Bosio, Boldetti, or Bottari. This may be attributed to his having published the first *Latin* work on the subject: for he has neither the originality of Bosio, nor the scientific accuracy of the later antiquarians, who have from time to time discovered fresh branches of the catacombs, with innumerable inscriptions and remains unknown to Aringhi.

But another line of research, not less interesting, was still prosecuted with continued success. The extensive stores of information belonging to early church history were now brought to bear upon the surviving monuments of ancient times: and an increased knowledge of pagan manners allowed of a finer distinction between what was purely Christian and what was merely adopted from Gentilism; the result has become apparent, in the disappearance of the angry controversial spirit which marked the discussions of the last two centuries. The Roman antiquarians, better informed in the history of the city, and less alarmed by bold attempts to deprive the martyrs and saints of the honours to which they had been thought entitled, no longer felt a pious horror of those who would have "taken away their gods;" while Protestant travellers, perhaps softened by the concessions of their adversaries, began in a more catholic spirit to honour the ground consecrated by the death or burial of those who had suffered for the common faith: so that the subject of debate is now not so much the Christianity or Heathenism of monuments and customs, as the age to which they belonged. Caution is still requisite, in order to steer a safe course between the credulity of the Roman antiquarian, who would see a saint or a martyr in every skeleton, and consecrate every cemetery by a miracle; and the scepticism of others, who, under the mask of candid inquiry, would reject all evidence short of absolute demonstration, in favour of the sufferings and triumphs of primitive believers.

The principal controversy concerning the Christian cemeteries arose from the zeal of two travellers, Burnet and Misson, who attempted to prove that there was no real distinction between the burial-places of Pagans and Christians in ancient times. The arguments of Burnet are ingenious, but founded upon data which a better acquaintance with the Roman cemeteries would have shown to be incorrect. He reasons, that the Christians, never averaging above forty-five thousand at one time in Rome, were quite inadequate to the execution of such works: that they would have been observed and molested by their enemies: and that the catacombs themselves would have been insupportable as a residence, from the putrefying bodies contained in them. That the Pagans buried as well as burned their dead: that the Christian cemeteries contain no dates older than the fourth and fifth centuries: in short, that a few monks, finding the trade in relics growing profitable, forged some tens of thousands of marble inscriptions, placed them in Pagan cemeteries below ground, and being driven away by persecution, were forced to abandon their fictitious monuments, which remained undiscovered till after the middle ages.*

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* Letters from Switzerland, Italy, &c.

Happily, a remarkable agreement on this point prevails among all modern writers; and, while it is stedfastly maintained that the Christian cemeteries are free from all admixture of Pagan bodies, it is allowed that the Christians did not begin the excavation of the catacombs, but that they appropriated to their own use the subterranean galleries, originally dug to provide the materials for building Rome. The complete occupation of them by Christian sepulchres, the absence of Pagan monuments, and the entire concurrence of all contemporary writers on the subject, speak so decisively in favour of their exclusively Christian character, that it is difficult to imagine how any further evidence could be adduced concerning a question never agitated till the seventeenth century. The testimony of Prudentius, a writer of the fourth century, is of great weight: he alludes to the catacombs continually, without seeming to conceive the possibility of their having been defiled by a single Pagan corpse. About the year 314, the catacombs were formally made over to the Christians by Constantine, as church property, on the ground that they had been already consecrated by the use to which they had been applied. Eusebius, who gives us this information, expressly calls them the burial-place of the martyrs.*

The chief sources of information regarding the catacombs lie in the various collections of remains in and near Rome. A few interesting Christian epitaphs are to be found on the walls of the Capitoline Museum, in the entrance to the catacombs of St. Sebastian, and in some private houses, basilicas, and villas. But all these collections are insignificant, when compared with the treasures of the Vatican, of which a short description must be given, as frequent reference will be made to them throughout this volume. First, there is the Christian Museum, properly so called, containing a number of sarcophagi, bas-reliefs, inscriptions, and medals, mostly published in the works of Roman antiquarians. Through the kindness of a friend, the author was allowed to copy some of the epitaphs lately added. Besides this, at the entrance to the Vatican Museum is a long corridor, the sides of which are completely lined with inscriptions plastered into the wall. On the right hand are arranged the epitaphs of Pagans, votive tablets, dedications of altars, fragments of edicts and public documents, collected from the neighbourhood of the city; and opposite to them, classed under the heads of Greek, Latin, and Consular monuments, appear the inscriptions of the ancient Christians. These are taken from the catacombs round Rome, and have hitherto remained unpublished.* To this gallery, from the circumstance of its containing little more than sepulchral stones, the name of Lapidarian, or *delle Lapidi*, has been given. The inscriptions, amounting to more than three thousand, were arranged in their present order by Gaetano Marini.

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* De vitâ Constantini, lib. ii. c. xl.

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* In the year 1841, the writer applied for permission "to copy some of the inscriptions contained in the Lapidarian Gallery," and a licence "to make some memoranda in drawing, in that part of the Museum" was granted. About that time, a

Notwithstanding the indifference manifested by the hundreds of visitors who daily traverse this corridor, there needs but a little attention to invest its walls with a degree of interest scarcely to be exceeded by any other remains of past ages. "I have spent," says Raoul Rochette, "many entire days in this sanctuary of antiquity, where the sacred and profane stand facing each other, in the written monuments preserved to us, as in the days when Paganism and Christianity, striving with all their powers, were engaged in mortal conflict. * * * And were it only the treasure of impressions which we receive from this immense collection of Christian epitaphs, taken from the

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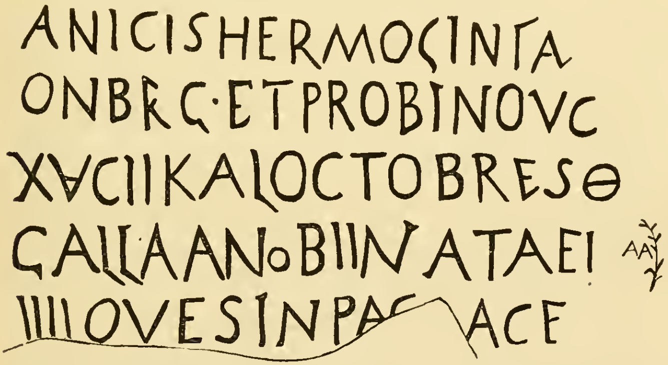
misunderstanding is reported to have arisen between the Jesuits and the officers of the Vatican; in consequence of which the former were refused permission to copy the inscriptions in question for their forthcoming work on the Christian Arts. An application was also made by them to the Custode of the Gallery, in order to prevent the use of its contents by a foreigner, perhaps a Protestant. On the last day of the month for which the author's licence was available, he was officially informed that his permission did not extend to the inscriptions, but only to a few blocks of sculpture scattered up and down the gallery. This communication was accompanied by a demand that the copies already made should be given up, with which the author refused to comply; and with the understanding that no more inscriptions should be copied, and that they should not be published *in Rome*, the matter was allowed to drop.

graves of the catacombs, and now affixed to the walls of the Vatican, this alone would be an inexhaustible fund of recollections and enjoyment for a whole life."*

The Consular epitaphs, principally comprised in a compartment at the further end of the corridor, are those containing the names of the consuls who governed during the years in which they were erected. Their value as chronological data is obvious; and their authenticity is the more to be relied upon, from their rude execution and imperfect orthography, sometimes leaving us in doubt as to the very names of the consuls intended to be expressed. No one could suspect the genuineness of such an inscription as the following:



ANICISHERMOCINΓA
ONBRC·ETPROBINOVC
XVCIIKALOCTOBRESΘ
CALLAANOBIINATAEI
IIIIQVESINPACE

Read — Anicio Hermogiano Olibrione et Probino V.C. xvii. Kal. Octobris, *Θανουσα* Galla Anobii, nata ei quarta, quiescit in pace.

In the Consulate of Anicius Hermogianus Olibrio, and of Probinus, on the seventeenth day before the Kalends of October, died Galla, daughter of Anobius, the fourth born to him. She rests in peace. (Lap. Gallery.)

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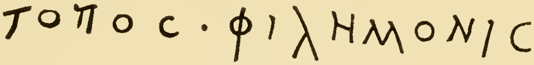
* Tableau des Catacombes, p. x.

These consuls fix the date to be A. D. 395. Θ is the usual contraction for Θανουσα.

It would appear that the better class of Christians, especially those of the third and fourth centuries, were more in the habit of adding dates to their epitaphs, than those of lower condition, or an earlier period.

On the walls, thus loaded with inscriptions belonging to professors of the rival religions, may be traced a contrast between the state of Pagan and that of Christian society in the ancient metropolis. The funereal lamentation expressed in neatly engraved hexameters, the tersely worded sentiments of stoicism, and the proud titles of Roman citizenship, attest the security and resources of the old religion. Further on, the whole heaven of Paganism is glorified by innumerable altars, where the epithets, unconquered, greatest, and best, are lavished upon the worthless shadows that peopled Olympus. Here and there are traces of complicated political orders; tablets containing the names of individuals composing a legion or cohort; legal documents relating to property, and whatever belongs to a state, such as the Roman Empire in its best times is known to have been. The first glance at the opposite wall is enough to show, that, " not many mighty, not many noble," were numbered among those whose epitaphs are there displayed: that these records, in almost every instance, are " annals of the poor,"—the poor to whom the Gospel was preached. A few of these inscriptions are scarcely to be distinguished from those of the Pagans, but the greater part betray by their execution haste and ignorance. An incoherent sentence, or a straggling mis-spelt scrawl, such as



ΤΟΠΟϹ · ΦΙΛΗΜΟΝΙϹ

The place of Philemon,

inscribed upon a rough slab destined to close a niche in caverns where daylight could never penetrate, tells of a persecuted or at least oppressed community. There is a simplicity in many of these slight records not without its charm:

BIRGINIVS PARVM
STETIT AP. N.

Virginius remained but a short time with us.

In no particular do the two classes contrast more strongly than in the expressions of resignation or resentment which occasionally find vent in their inscriptions. Mabillon gives this Pagan epitaph found in Rome:*

PROCOPE · MANVS · LEBO · CONTRA
DEVM · QVI · ME · INNOCENTEM · SVS ·
TVLIT · QVAE · VIXIT · ANNOS · XX
POS · PROCLVS

I, Procope, lift up my hands against God, who snatched away me, innocent. She lived twenty years. Proclus set up this.

A Christian fragment found by Sponius speaks a different language:†

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* Iter Italicum, p. 79.

† Miscellanea Eruditæ Antiquitatis, sect. ix.

QVI DEDIT ET ABSTVLIT
OMINI BENEDIC
QVI BIXIT ANN
PACE CONS

The remainder of this inscription has been destroyed, as far as mere perishable marble is concerned; but the immortal sentiment which pervades the sentence supplies the loss. Like a voice from among the graves, broken by sobs yet distinctly intelligible, fall the few remaining words upon the listening ear: "—who gave and hath taken—blessed—of the Lord—who lived—years—in peace—in the consulate of—."

The slabs of stone used for closing Christian graves average from one to three feet in length. In this they differ remarkably from the sepulchral tablets of the Pagans, who, being accustomed to burn their dead, required a much smaller covering for the cinerary urn. The letters on Christian monuments are from half an inch to four inches in height, and generally coloured in the incision with a pigment resembling Venetian red. The custom of chiselling the letters in the stone is alluded to by Prudentius, who calls upon his fellow Christians to wash with tears the furrows in those marble tablets:

"Nos pio fletu, date, perluamus
Marmorum sulcos—"*

The orthography of these epitaphs is generally faulty, the letters irregular, and the sense not always obvious. These characteristics the author has been anxious to preserve, and has therefore spared no pains in executing copies in exact facsimile, though much reduced in size.

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* Peristephanon, Hymn VII.

There is another point of difference between the Pagan and Christian inscriptions, which must not be allowed to pass unnoticed. The Christian convert no longer displays upon his sepulchral tablet the proud array of prænomen, nomen, and cognomen, which distinguished him as a Roman citizen, but deems it sufficient to be recognised by that name which belongs to him as a subject of the heavenly kingdom. Till the number of Christians increased, so as to render a further distinction necessary, the baptismal name alone was recorded in the cemetery: it was enough to say

SEVI LOCV

The place of Sevus.

MARTYRIA IN PACE

Martyria in peace.

BIB · BEOVENE
MERENTI

To Bibbeus the well-deserving: or

Tω MAKAPIω ΠΑΥΛω
ΗΔΥΛΑΛΟC ΑΔΕΛΦΟC

To the blessed Paul his brother Hedulalos.

Occasionally we meet with a second name: as

CO LORINATIVS BAR
NI BENTIVS LARGIA
VGI EAGAPENI BENE
SV
AE MERENTI IN PACE A xxx.

Lorinatius Barbentius to Largia Agape, the well-deserving. In peace. (Aged) thirty years. His wife.

Owing to this custom of omitting surnames, we are not able to recognise the individuals mentioned in ancient Church history, in more than two or three instances among the 70,000 epitaphs supposed to be contained in the catacombs.

The frequent occurrence of Greek epitaphs in these cemeteries needs explanation; for, although the higher class of Romans used Greek and Latin in conversation, almost indifferently, this does not account for the employment of Greek by the lower order of Christians. An idea was probably entertained, that Greek would be the language of the new dispensation, as Hebrew had been of the old: the New Testament being written in Greek, as the Law and the Prophets had been in Hebrew. Both to Hebrews and to Romans, St. Paul, a Roman Jew, wrote in Greek. Nor was there anything unreasonable in the supposition, that the Greek dress, in which Christianity first appeared in the world, should be specially consecrated to her service; and if any were to be chosen as the general language of the Church, no doubt could rest upon the propriety of selecting that in which had been dictated the Gospels and Catholic epistles. That Greek was used by the Roman Christians, rather from feeling than from convenience, appears from some epitaphs composed of Latin words written in Greek characters,—a poor apology for the favourite language, but equally gratifying to some of the survivors, who were satisfied by finding the inscription perfectly unintelligible.

Without being too severe upon the scholarship of our humble mourners, we may suppose that many whose acquaintance with Greek was confined to the alphabet, found gratification in recording their loss in a manner bearing some resemblance to the epitaphs of their more learned neighbours. A curious specimen of Græco-Latin is found in the epitaph of Theodora:

ΒΕΝΕ ΜΕΡΕΝΤΙ ΦΙΛΙΕ
ΘΕΟΔΩΡΕ ΚΥΕ ΒΙξΙΤ
ΜΗϹΙϹ ΧΙ ΔΙΗΣ ΧVIII

To our well-deserving daughter Theodora, who lived eleven months and eighteen days.

So also the epitaph of Libera:

ΛΕΙΒΕΡΕ ΜΑΞΙΜΙΛΛΑΕ
ΚΟΙΟΥΓΕ
ΑΜΑΝΤΙϹϹΙΜΑΕ ΦΙΚΙΤ ΕΝ ΠΑΚΕ

To Libera Maximilla, a most loving wife. She lived in peace. (Aringhi.)

The mode of spelling, under these circumstances, is not always what we might expect to find:

ΑΝΝΟΥϹ ΤΡΙΓΙΝΤΑ
ΙΝ ΠΑΚΕ

—thirty years. In peace. (Vat. Library wall.)

This pronunciation of *pace* is preserved in the following, in Latin:

VIDALIO INPACHE ☧

Vidalio, in the peace of Christ.

Some of the Roman Christians, though sufficiently versed in Greek to dictate to the stonecutter, were not able to supply a copy in that character; such persons made shift to express themselves thus:

PRIMA IRENE
SOE

Prima, peace be to thee. (Boldetti.)

The merely classical student, unless in search of the vernacular language of ancient Rome, will find little in these inscriptions to repay the trouble of perusal. Some obsolete and barbarous expressions, the gradual origin of the cursive character, and the uncertain pronunciation of some consonants, indicated by the varied modes of writing the same word, will indeed gratify his curiosity; but these are not the most interesting points of investigation suggested. Higher purposes are served by the examination of these monuments, inasmuch as they express the feelings of a body of Christians, whose leaders alone are known to us in history. The Fathers of the Church live in their voluminous works; the lower orders are only represented by these simple records, from which, with scarcely an exception, sorrow and complaint are banished; the boast of suffering, or an appeal to the revengeful passions, is nowhere to be found. One expresses faith, another hope, a third charity. The genius of primitive Christianity, "to believe, to love, and to suffer," has never been better illustrated. These "sermons in stones" are addressed to the heart, and not to the head—to the feelings rather than to the taste; and possess additional value from being the work of the purest and most influential portion of the "catholic and apostolic Church" then in existence.

With the churches of antiquity our own Church claims resemblance; for, from a professed imitation of their constitution has resulted the structure of the Anglican Reformation.* With what learning and moderation the authors of that work proceeded, with what steadfastness they clung to the ordinances of apostolic times, we, without sharing the labours of their toilsome research, may gather from this comparatively recent discovery of the picture of a primitive Church. Had we to choose among the communities founded by the Apostles, where should we hope to find more distinct traces of pristine purity than in that Church whose faith, as St. Paul thankfully acknowledged, was "spoken of throughout the whole world?" In which, as remarked by Tertullian, "the Apostles poured out their whole doctrine with their blood; where Peter was conformed to his Lord in suffering; where Paul was crowned with the death of John; and where the Apostle John, after being put into heated oil without sustaining injury, received sentence of banishment to the island."† With the humblest members of a Church so illustrious in its origin, so forward in conflict with the powers of Paganism, we would gladly maintain some intercourse; but what communion can we hold with the more obscure defenders of the faith, whose names, pronounced at the font, were heard but once again, perhaps with the addition of "Martyr"? can any greeting be wafted from them to us across the gulf, not so much of centuries as of superstitions, which yawns between? In these remains, "the Church which" *was* "in Babylon, saluteth" us.

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* Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, Canon 30. sect. 3.

† Tertullian, De Præscriptione Hæreticorum, cap. 36.

The student of Christian archæology must never lose sight of the distinction between the actual relics of a persecuted Church, and the subsequent productions of a superstitious age. When Christianity, on the cessation of its troubles, emerged from those recesses, and walked boldly on the soil beneath which it had been glad to seek concealment, the humble cradle of its infancy became a principal object of veneration, almost of worship. To decorate the chapels, adorn by monuments the labyrinths of sepulchres, and pay an excessive regard to all that belonged to martyrs and martyrdom, was the constant labour of succeeding centuries. Hence arise some chronological difficulties, which, until they are solved, affect the value of certain inferences that may be drawn from these remains. But the Lapidarian Gallery affords us a valuable rule for judging in doubtful cases; for throughout its contents, selected and arranged under Papal superintendence, there are no prayers for the dead (unless the frequently recorded wish, "May you live," "May God refresh you," be so construed); no addresses to the Virgin Mary, nor to the Apostles or earlier Saints; and, with the exception of such relics of paganism as "eternal sleep," "eternal home," &c., no expressions contrary to the plain sense of Scripture.*

The freedom from admixture with later remains which characterises this collection, is owing to the comparatively late period at which it was made; the more accessible parts of the catacombs having been previously rifled of their contents. From the difficulty of reaching the farther branches, they were not only the first to be abandoned by the Christians after the pressure of persecution was relaxed, but also the last to attract the attention of modern discoverers. Thus the chronological order has been inverted: the comparatively modernised entrances were soonest brought to light by antiquarians, while the distant recesses, into which persecution had forced the primitive Christians, were only revealed after many years' diligent investigation. From such remoter crypts were taken the marbles which cover the Lapidarian wall; and thanks to the honesty of Marini and his assistants, we possess, in this unadulterated form, the relics of a primitive Church.

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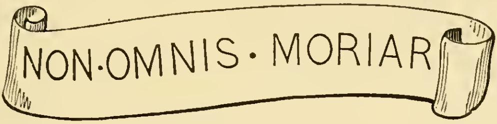
* There is in this collection one inscription containing the phrase *Roges pro nobis*, "pray for us." Fabretti has published an epitaph concluding with TVP ET TVPE PRO EOS, probably, *tu pete pro eis*. The extreme rarity of such inscriptions becomes the more remarkable when it is known that the catacombs remained open during half the fifth century.

Perhaps it may safely be asserted, that the ancient Church appears in the Lapidarian Gallery in a more favourable light than in the writings of Fathers and historians. It may be that the sepulchral tablet is more congenial to the display of pious feeling than the controversial epistle, or even the much-needed episcopal rebuke. Besides the gentle and amiable spirit every where breathed, the distinctive character of these remains is essentially *Christian:* the name of Christ is repeated in an endless variety of forms, and the actions of His life are figured with every degree of rudeness of execution. The second Person of the Trinity is neither viewed in the light of a temporal Messiah, nor degraded to the estimate of a mere example, but is invested with all the honours of a Redeemer. On this subject there is no reserve, no heathenish suppression of the distinguishing feature of our religion: on stones innumerable appears the Good Shepherd, bearing on his shoulders the recovered sheep, by which many an illiterate believer expressed his sense of personal salvation. One, according to his epitaph, "sleeps in Christ;" another is buried with a prayer that "she may live in the Lord Jesus." One has his sepulchre sealed with the inscription, "Christ is God;" happy in not having to learn that truth when his sepulchre shall be rent asunder. But most of all, the cross in its simplest form is employed to testify the faith of the deceased; and whatever ignorance may have prevailed regarding the letter of Holy Writ, or the more mysterious doctrines contained in it, there was no want of apprehension of that sacrifice, "whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of Heaven."



CHAP. II.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CATACOMBS.

THE great increase which took place in the magnificence of ancient Rome, during the latter times of the republic, naturally led to the formation of quarries in the immediate neighbourhood. In this respect, the city of the Cæsars resembles many others, as Paris, Naples, Syracuse, and Alexandria, all more or less surrounded or undermined by tortuous excavations. The size and shape of these differ according to the firmness of the substratum: at Naples they are large and lofty; but at Rome, from the crumbling nature of the soil, narrow and low. Several of these *catacombs*, as they are called, are represented in the work of D'Agincourt*, where it is easy to trace a connection between the solidity of the ground and the regularity of the galleries. The materials quarried in the Campagna of Rome consisted of tufa and puzzolana, a volcanic sandy rock which from its texture was well adapted to the excavation of long galleries.

These subterranean works attracted general notice during the time of Augustus, when their extent rendered them dangerous. They first obtained celebrity as the scene of the domestic tragedy referred to by Cicero in his oration for Cluentius. The riches of Asinius, a young Roman citizen, had excited the avarice of Oppianicus, who employed an accomplice to personate Asinius, and to execute a will in his name. The pretended Asinius having bequeathed the property to Oppianicus, and obtained the signatures of some strangers, the true Asinius was inveigled to the gardens of the Esquiline, and precipitated into one of the sandpits (in arenarias quasdam extra Portam Esquilinam). It was in these caverns that Nero was advised to conceal himself, when terrified by the sentence of an enraged senate; on which occasion he made answer to his freedman Phaon, that he would not go under ground while living.

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* Histoire de l'Art, vol. iv. pl. ix.

The sand obtained from the Esquiline pits was used for making cement; it was recommended for this purpose by the architect Vitruvius, as preferable to all other.

The custom of digging sand from these crypts or galleries being established, the whole subsoil on one side of Rome was in course of time perforated by a network of excavations, spreading ultimately to a distance of fifteen miles. In the mean time the original quarries, exhausted of their stores, were appropriated to other uses. We must bear in mind that at this date, that is, about the close of the republic, the Romans were accustomed to *burn* their dead, excepting a few families of distinction, who preferred burying them, and the lowest orders of the people, who were not able to procure the honours of a funeral pile. Certain classes of persons, as those who had made away with themselves, or had perished by the hand of the law, were forbidden to receive the rites of cremation. The prohibition was also extended to such as had been struck by lightning; a circumstance seized upon by Tertullian, as illustrative of the Christian's salvation from hell, "He who has been touched by heavenly fire is safe from being consumed by any other flame."

For these persons the pits left by the sand diggers on the Esquiline hill afforded a convenient burial place; and their bodies were thrown in to putrefy, much to the annoyance of the inhabitants of that part of Rome. The *puticulæ*, *puticuli*, or *culinæ*, as these pits were called, took their name either from their resemblance to a well, in Latin *puteus*, or from the verb *putesco*, to putrefy.*

The Esquiline hill, infested by banditti, and rendered almost impassable by the pestilential atmosphere generated in the common receptacles for the dead, remained in that loathsome condition till it was reclaimed by Mæcenas, and converted into gardens. This fact, of great importance to our history, is alluded to by Horace, who compliments his patron upon the benefit thus conferred on the public. The scarecrow deity set up in the garden is represented as congratulating himself upon the change: "A reed stuck upon the top of my head keeps off the troublesome birds, and prevents them from settling in the newly made gardens. Before, the cast-out bodies of slaves were brought hither by their fellow-servants, to be deposited in ill-made coffins, in narrow cells. This place was a common sepulchre for the dregs of the people; for the buffoon Pantolabus, and the spendthrift Nomentanus. . . . Now, it is possible to live on the wholesome Esquiline, and to bask on its sunny banks; where lately the ground covered with whitening bones was enough to produce melancholy." *

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* Both derivations are supported by Festus, a grammarian of the sixth century: whereas Varro, who lived nearer the time, having served as a lieutenant under Pompey, mentions only the verb, and limits the designation *puticulæ* to the pits without the Esquiline gate. *Culinæ* is said to be a further diminutive of *puticulinæ*.

From these notices it appears that the place of burial was *common*, that is, not appropriated to a family or tribe, the only community of sepulture known to the Romans in general; and also, that the unburnt bodies, not their ashes, were thrown into those receptacles.

When it was maintained by some modern travellers, that the pits in the garden of Mæcenas were no other than a part of the catacombs, occupied by the Christians in common with the Pagans, the statement was made in defiance of all probability. The death of Mæcenas preceded the introduction of Christianity into Rome, so that none but heathen could have been buried on the ground enclosed by him; and no signs of Christian occupation occur near the spot. The most cursory examination of the Christian catacombs and Pagan sepulchres will prove that both classes of Romans carefully preserved a separation between their respective dead. Cyprian accused Martial of burying his sons in profane sepulchres, and thus exposing them to the contact of heathen bodies.*

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* Horatii Serm. i. 8. The scholiast, commenting upon this passage, remarks, "Here were formerly brought the bodies (cadavera) of plebeians or of slaves, for public sepulchres then existed there." Slaves, however, were not always buried, but occasionally burnt in heaps on a large pile:

> "Quatuor inscripti portabant vile cadaver,
> Accipit infelix qualia mille rogus."
>
> Martial, lib. viii. epig. 75.

Besides the persons forced by poverty or by law to bury their dead unburnt, the higher ranks partially adopted the same custom. We are told by historians that the Cornelia family, followed by a few others, introduced the practice, and the tomb of the Scipiones (a branch of that family) confirms their statement. This mausoleum is contained in an excavated gallery, in a vineyard on the Appian way, within the gate of St. Sebastian. Over the entrance is inscribed *Sepulchra Scipionum*; and on the sarcophagi formerly found within, but now deposited in the Vatican Museum, are the names of individuals belonging to that house.

This description of the Pagan sepulchres, though apparently foreign to the purpose of the present work, has been rendered necessary by the attempts formerly made to confound them with the Christian cemeteries. But a distinction can easily be drawn: the heathen occupied the Esquiline hill, and a few pits about that part of Rome; while the catacombs proper, that is, the branching subterranean passages, are the exclusive property of the ancient Church.

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* Ep. 67.

The caves near the present Basilica of St. Sebastian are considered to have been the first occupied by the Christians. To these in particular were applied the expressions *ad arenas*, *cryptæ arenariæ*, and *cryptæ*, to which was added the Greek form *ad catacumbas*. The term catacombs, therefore, signified originally the pits about that part of the Appian way; and we find the phrases *in catecumpas*, of the seventh century, and *juxta catacumbas* of the thirteenth, limited to a space extending from the church of St. Sebastian to the circus of Romulus, and the tomb of Cecilia Metella.* The phrase, *locus qui dicitur catacumbas*, was used by Gregory the Great, about 595 (this is the earliest mention of the word catacombs now extant): he describes the place as two miles distant from Rome, that is, the Sebastian catacombs. This is all that we know of the origin of the word, though its Greek form seems to indicate a much higher antiquity. It never occurs in the cemeteries themselves, nor was it applied to the subterranean passages in general, till about the thirteenth century; while, in our own times, it has become a generic term for all excavations of a certain length and tortuosity, whether they lie beneath the pyramids of the desert, or undermine the site of a modern metropolis.

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* See Roestell's learned article in the Chevalier Bunsen's Roms Beschreibung, vol. i. p. 374.

In the great work of D'Agincourt, "The History of Art, drawn from its Monuments," is the description of a subterranean labyrinth in France, which strongly resembles the Roman catacombs. The inhabitants of Quesnel, driven from their homes by an invasion of the Normans, sought refuge in the quarries from which the materials of their houses had been extracted. Finding the caves narrow and incommodious, they enlarged them to the width and height of ten or twelve feet, and vaulted them above like an oven. Here they concealed themselves, their furniture, and their cattle; and even at the present time these retreats serve for the meetings of the young people of the district, who work there together during the winter evenings.

It being proved by historical evidence that the catacombs were originally dug by the pagans for sandpits and quarries, it remains to be shown in what manner the Christians became connected with them. The *arenarii*, or sand-diggers, were persons of the lowest grade, and from the nature of their occupation probably formed a distinct class. There is reason to suppose that Christianity spread very early among them; for, in time of persecution, the converts employed in the subterranean passages not only took refuge there themselves, but also put the whole Church in possession of these otherwise inaccessible retreats. When we reflect upon the trials which awaited the Church, and the combined powers of earth and hell which menaced its earliest years, it is impossible not to recognise the fostering care of a heavenly Hand, in thus providing a cradle for the infant community. Perhaps, to the protection afforded by the catacombs, as an impregnable fortress from which persecution always failed to dislodge it, the Church of Rome owed much of the rapidity of its triumph; and, to the preservation of its earliest sanctuaries, its ancient superiority in discipline and manners. The customs of the first ages, stamped indelibly on the walls of the catacombs, must have contributed to check the spirit of innovation soon observable throughout Christendom. The elements of a pure faith were written "with an iron pen, in the rock, for ever;" and, if the Church of after-times had looked back to her subterranean home, "to the hole of the pit whence she was digged," she would there have sought in vain for traces of forced celibacy, the invocation of saints, and the representation of the Deity in painting or sculpture. Whatever dates may be attributed to other remains, this is certain, that the Lapidarian Gallery contains no support whatever for the dogmas of the Council of Trent. With this fact to guide us in distinguishing between what belongs to a pure age, and what to the times of innovation, we may safely refer to the latter a number of inscriptions preserved in the vaults of St. Peter's, which contain prayers to the Virgin Mary, and other peculiarities of Roman theology.

The history of Christianity is sufficient to fix the age of many monuments. The time in which some bishops, moved by the representations of Vigilantius, went so far as to refuse ordination to unmarried deacons, cannot be confounded with an age in which the celibacy of the clergy became compulsory; nor can we possibly attribute to a century that knew only the sign of the cross in the simplest form of two straight lines, a crucifix of the size of life, smeared with the imitation of blood, and surmounted by a crown of actual thorns.

The Vatican Museum affords excellent illustrations of the connection between Christianity and art, in respect of the changes which both have undergone. To read aright the great lesson contained in those wondrous halls, to interpret the response that issues from that mount of Vaticination, requires a knowledge either of Church history, or of the history of art, but not both; given the one, the other may be dispensed with. Thus the era of Michael Angelo is in some measure fixed by the frescoes of the Sistine, where appears a visible representation of the Eternal Father. In the gallery of easel-pictures, that tomb of the Virgin deserted by its occupant, and filled with springing flowers, intelligibly records the fact, that Raphael lived and painted after the invention of the legend of the Assumption. And we need not look so suspiciously on that "miracle of the bleeding wafer," or that "descent of the Virgin to purgatory," as if the canvas recorded only a lie; for it declares the indisputable truth, that the painter flourished after the invention of purgatory and transubstantiation. If from thence we pass through the Vatican library, turn to the left hand, and follow the suite of Byzantine cabinets, we find ourselves in a world of art, where the churchman is a better guide than the artist, in matters of chronology. There is, in this collection of paintings, neither purgatory nor transubstantiation; but there are crucifixions and unspeakable flagellations, everywhere drapery stained with blood, and the heart-rending sorrows of the Mater Dolorosa. Evidently we are among the works of the early middle ages. Another turn brings us to the Lapidarian Hall, where, instead of tortures and streaming blood, are displayed the symbols of peace and hope. These simple and cheerful emblems tell of apostolic times, the days in which Christianity built her nest among mankind. If persecution and martyrdom were then known, they were straightway forgottten and forgiven; and, for once in the world's history, the storm of earthly passions is not heard. The peace which pervades these remains, is by no means accounted for by the circumstances of a martyr Church; it passes our understanding, and thereby reveals its heavenly origin.

It appears from a number of testimonies, not of any great value individually, though of some weight when combined, that the primitive confessors were at times sentenced to work in the sand-pits. This punishment is referred to in many Acts of the Martyrs, especially in those of Marcellus, where we are told that the Emperor Maximian " condemned all the Roman soldiers who were Christians to hard labour; and in various places set them to work, some to dig stones, others sand." He also ordered Ciriacus and Sisinnus to be strictly guarded, condemning them to dig sand and to carry it on their shoulders. Marius and his companions were sentenced to the same employment. There is also a tradition that the baths of Diocletian were built with the materials procured by the Christians.

The fact that the catacombs were employed as a refuge from persecution, rests upon good evidence, notwithstanding objections founded upon the narrowness of the passages, the difficulty of supporting life, and the risk of discovery incurred by seeking concealment in an asylum so well known to the Pagans. These objections do not apply to a temporary residence below ground in time of danger; and it is not pretended that the catacombs were inhabited under other circumstances. The recourse to such an asylum was no novelty in history, for long before that time, many " of whom the world was not worthy," took refuge in dens and caves of the earth. In the excavations at Quesnel, not only persons, but cattle, contrived to support existence:

added to which, we have, as will be seen presently, the direct testimony of several writers. Had the intricacies of the catacombs been known to the heathen authorities, or the entrances few in number, they would doubtless have afforded an insecure asylum. But the entrances were numberless, scattered over the Campagna for miles; and the labyrinth below was so occupied by the Christians, and so blocked up in various places by them, that pursuit must have been almost useless. The Acts of the Martyrs relate some attempts made to obstruct the galleries with earth, in order to destroy those who were concealed within; but setting aside these legends, we are credibly informed that not only did the Christians take refuge there, but that they were also occasionally overtaken by their pursuers. The catacombs have become illustrious by the actual martyrdom of some noble witnesses to the truth. Xystus, bishop of Rome, together with Quartus, one of his clergy, suffered below ground in the time of Cyprian. Stephen, also bishop of Rome, was traced by heathen soldiers to his subterranean chapel: on the conclusion of divine service, he was thrust back into his episcopal chair, and beheaded. The letters of Christians then living refer to such scenes with a simplicity that dispels all idea of exaggeration; while their expectation of sharing the same fate affords a vivid picture of those dreadful times.

An authentic history of Stephen during his long residence in the catacombs, would be surpassed in interest by few narratives in the ecclesiastical archives. Some incidents have been handed down to us.* From time to time he was consulted by his clergy, who resorted to him for advice and exhortation. On one occasion, a layman named Hippolytus, himself a refugee, sought the bishop's cell to receive instruction regarding a circumstance that preyed upon his mind. Paulina, his heathen sister, together with her husband Adrian, were in the habit of sending provisions by their two children to Hippolytus and his companions. The unconverted state of these relations, by whom his bodily life was supported, weighed heavily upon him, and by the advice of Stephen a plan was laid for detaining the children, so that the parents were forced to seek them in the cavern. Every argument was used by Stephen and Hippolytus to induce their benefactors to embrace the faith, and though for the time ineffectual, the desired end was at length accomplished. Tradition adds that they all suffered martyrdom, and were buried in the catacombs.

In the time of Diocletian, Caius is said to have lived eight years in the catacombs, and to have terminated this long period of confession by undergoing martyrdom. Even as late as the year 352, Liberius, bishop of Rome, took up his abode in the cemetery of St. Agnes during the Arian persecution.

The discovery of wells and springs in various parts assists us in understanding how life could be supported in those dismal regions; although there is no evidence to prove that the wells were sunk for that purpose. One of them has been named the font of St. Peter; and however apocryphal the tradition which refers it to apostolic times, the fact of its having been long used for baptism is not to be disputed. Some of the wells were probably dug with the intention of draining the catacombs.

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* This story, with several others, will be found in the better class of Acts of the Martyrs.

St. Chrysostom, who lived not long after the days of persecution, alludes to the concealment of a noble lady under ground. In an indignant remonstrance against the festivities held over the graves of martyrs in his dissipated city, he compares with the luxurious revels into which the Agape had degenerated, the actual condition of those whose sufferings were celebrated in so unbefitting a manner. "What connection," he asks, "is there between your feasts, and the hardships of a lady unaccustomed to privation, trembling in a vault, apprehensive of the capture of her maid, upon whom she depends for her daily food?"

These circumstances sufficiently prove the habit of taking refuge in the cemeteries on any sudden emergency; and it is not difficult to understand how the concealment was effected. On the outbreak of a persecution, the clergy, heads of families, and others particularly obnoxious to the Pagans, were the first to suffer; perhaps the only individuals whose death or exile was intended by the imperial officers. Aware of their danger, and well versed in the signs of impending persecution, they betook themselves to the catacombs, there to be supported by those whose obscure condition left them at liberty.

So well was this mode of escaping their vengeance known to the heathen, that several Roman edicts made it a capital offence to enter the cemeteries. The rescript of Valerian and Gallienus begins with this prohibition; and at the close of their persecution, Gallienus gave the Christians a formal license to return to the catacombs.* This permission was repealed by Maximian, on the renewal of the Diocletian persecution.

The limitation applied to a residence in the catacombs, must be extended in nearly an equal degree to the custom of worshipping in them. It is well known, that before the time of Constantine there were in Rome many rooms or halls employed for divine worship, though perhaps no edifices built expressly for that purpose. Besides this, the extreme smallness of the catacomb chapels, and their distance from the usual dwellings of the Christians, oppose serious objections to the supposition that they were used for regular services. Yet nothing in history is better attested than the fact that, throughout the fourth century, the Church met there for the celebration of the eucharist, for prayer at the graves of the martyrs, and for the love-feasts, or Agapæ. Prudentius† tells us that he had often prayed before the tomb of Hippolytus, and gives a minute description of the catacomb in which it was placed: — "Among the cultivated grounds, not far outside the walls, lies a deep cavern with dark recesses. A descending path, with winding steps, leads through the dim turnings; and the daylight entering by the mouth of the cavern, somewhat illumines the first part of the way. But the darkness grows deeper as we advance, till we meet with openings cut in the roof of the passages, admitting light from above. . . . There have I prayed prostrate, sick with the corruptions of soul and body, and each time obtained relief." The discovery of chapels, altars, episcopal chairs, and fonts, indicates the existence of a subterranean service at some time or other; but it is difficult to prove that all the religious ceremonies were performed in the catacombs at a very early period.

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* Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. c. 13.

† Peristephanon, hymn iv.

The following incription, which was found over one of the graves in the cemetery of Callistus, shows that prayers were offered below ground. The monument is of somewhat later date than the death of the martyr to whose memory it is raised; but being affixed to his actual tomb, bears strong marks of authenticity. The author of this volume has ventured to render the concluding letters, IV. X. TEM. by "in Christianis temporibus."

ALEXANDER MORTVVS NON EST SED VIVIT SVPER ASTRA ET CORPVS IN HOC TVMVLO QVIESCIT VITAM EXPLEVIT SVB ANTONINO IMP° QVIVBI MVLTVM BENE FITII ANTEVENIRE PRAEVIDERET PRO GRATIA ODIVM REDDIDIT

☧ GENVA ENIM FLECTENS VERO DEO SA-
CRIFICATVRVS AD SVPPLICIA DVCITVRO
TEMPORA INFAVSTA QVIBVS INTER SA-
CRA ET VOTA NE IN CAVERNIS QVIDEM
SALVARI POSSIMVS QVID MISERIVS
VITA SED QVID MISERIVS IN MORTE
CVM AB AMICIS ET PARENTIBVS SE-
PELIRI NEQVEANT TANDEM IN COELO
CORVSCANT PARVM VIXIT QVI VIXIT
IV. X. TEM.

In Christ. Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He ended his life under the Emperor Antonine, who, foreseeing that great benefit would result from his services, returned evil for good. For, while on his knees, and about to sacrifice to the true God, he was led away to execution. O sad times! in which, among sacred rites and prayers, even in caverns, we are not safe. What can be more wretched than such a life? and what than such a death? when they cannot be buried by their friends and relations—at length they sparkle in heaven. He has scarcely lived, who has lived in Christian times.

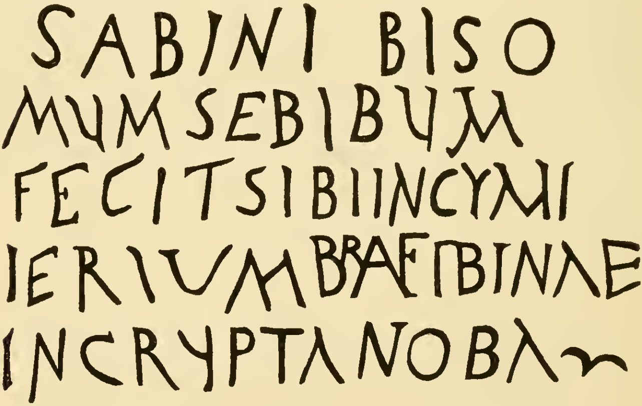
"He lives above the stars, and his body rests in this tomb:" there is faith in this joining together, as things equally tangible and matter of fact, the place of his spiritual abode and the resting-place of his body. There are also other points in the inscription worthy of notice—the beginning, in which the first words (Alexander mortuus), after leading us to expect a lamentation, break out into an assurance of glory and immortality—the description of the temporal insecurity in which the believers of that time lived, the difficulty of procuring Christian burial for the martyrs, with the certainty of their heavenly reward; and the concluding sentence forcibly recalling the words of St. Paul, "as dying, yet behold we live." The epitaph does not state that Alexander was put to death only on account of his religion, but would imply that the private hatred of the emperor found in it a pretext for his destruction. This backwardness to claim the full merit of matyrdom for Alexander, is highly characteristic of the first three centuries. The Antonine persecution began about the year 160.

After this general history of the catacombs, from their origin as sand-pits to the time of their employment as an asylum and a cemetery by the Christians, it is proposed to examine them in detail, and to set before the reader the customs, sufferings, and works of those by whom they were occupied.

CHAP. III.

THE CATACOMBS AS A CHRISTIAN CEMETERY.

The annexed inscription (copied from the Lapidarian Gallery) shows the term cemetery to have been anciently applied to the catacombs:



SABINI BISO
MVM SEBIBVM
FECITSIBIINCYMI
IERIVMBALBINAE
INCRYPTANOBA

"Sabini bisomum: se vivo fecit sibi in cemeterio Balbinæ, in cryptâ novâ."

"The bisomum of Sabinus. He made it for himself during his lifetime, in the cemetery of Balbina, in the new crypt."*

Besides the older galleries dug for the purpose of extracting sand and puzzolana, the Christians continued to excavate fresh passages for their own convenience. These additions, distinguished by their superior height and regularity, were called *new crypts.* The earth taken out was thrown into old branches of the galleries, some of them filled with graves; a circumstance which has given rise to many conjectures. Boldetti, having found part of a catacomb blocked up with earth at its entrance, but empty further back, and lined with what he took for the graves of martyrs, supposed that the Christians had adopted this means of preserving their most valued relics during the Diocletian persecution. Roestell thinks this improbable, because they would not have willingly cut off their own access to the graves of the martyrs. May not the fugitives have cast up these mounds as obstacles to the pursuit of their enemies? since, by blocking up the principal passages, and leaving open only those known to themselves, they might render the galleries beyond quite inaccessible to their persecutors.

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* Balbina was a virgin of some celebrity; she was buried on the Via Ardeatina, and the catacomb was named after her. Aringhi, tom. i. p. 479.

The ramifications of the catacombs may be classed in two divisions: those originally dug for the purpose of procuring sand, known by their irregularity, as well as by their smaller dimensions; and the additions made by the Christians, when want of space obliged them either to dig fresh galleries, or to square and enlarge those already existing. These new crypts, mentioned in several inscriptions, belong to the more peaceful times of Christianity, when the custom of burying in the catacombs had become so completely established, that even after it was no longer a necessary precaution, subterranean sepulture was preferred. Vicinity to the tombs of saints and martyrs was an inducement to the continuance of the practice, and is often alluded to in inscriptions. The following was found in the cemetery of St. Cyriaca :

IN CRVPTA NOBA RETRO SAN
CTVS EMERVMSE VIVAS BALER
RA ET SABINA MERUM LOC
VBISONIA BAPRONE ET A
BIATORE.

Read :—In cryptâ novâ retro sanctos emerunt se vivis Valeria et Sabina. Emerunt locum bisomum ab Aprone et a Viatore.

In the new crypt, behind the saints, Valeria and Sabina bought (it) for themselves while living. They bought a bisomum from Apro and Viator.

The two inscriptions just quoted agree in several particulars : the barbarism of the Latinity, and the want of grammatical construction in the sentences, indicate either a time of extreme corruption of the vernacular language, or ignorance among Christian sculptors. The word *bisomum* occurs in both ; a term compounded of Greek and Latin, signifying a place for two bodies. The words *trisomum* and *quadrisomum*, applied to graves capable of containing three or four bodies, are of less frequent occurrence. Aringhi once found the word trisomum : the inscription appears never to have been finished :

SE BIBA EMET DOMNINA
LOCVM A SVCESSVM
TRISOMVM VBI POSITI
ET

Domnina, while living, bought of Successus a trisomum ; in which are placed — and —.

The word quadrisomum (a four-body tomb) occurs in the Lapidarian Gallery:

SVLATV NICOMACI FLABIANI LOCV MARMARARI QVADRISOMVM.

Read — Consulatu Nicomaci Flaviani locum marmorario quadrisomum. (A quadrisomum, bought of the stone-cutter.)

We may attribute this fragment to the year 272, in which Nicomacus and Falsonius were consuls.

"In cemeterio Balbinæ"—in the sleeping-place of Balbina. In this short phrase are implied two important circumstances, entirely at variance with the customs and feeling of pagan Rome. First, we learn from it the existence of common cemeteries, which we find to have contained persons of every class, as well as families connected with each other only by their profession of Christianity. The heathen Romans had sepulchres appropriated either to a single body, or to all the members of one tribe; as the tomb of the Scipiones, the tomb of the Nasones, and others. The "common sepulchre" of the dregs of the people is spoken of by Horace with contempt; and if we look back through the history of the world, we find everywhere the disposition to build tombs, for the exclusive use of individual families. The mummy-pits of Egpyt, as the author has learnt from personal inspection, are constructed upon this principle. "He was buried with his fathers" is a common conclusion to the history of a Jewish patriarch. It was reserved for Christianity first to deposit side by side the bodies of persons unconnected with each other, — an arrangement which prevails throughout the whole of Christendom, from the catacombs of ancient Rome to the modern churchyards of our own country.

From the words in the last inscription "behind the saints," as well as from those in the next, — "in the place of the blessed," it would appear that proximity to the graves of more ancient Christians was thought worthy of being recorded in an epitaph : —

ΕΝΘΑΔΕ ΠΑΥΛΕΙΝΑ
ΚΕΙΤΑΙΜΑΚΑΡΩΝ
ΕΝΙΧΩΡΩ
ΗΝΚΗΔΕΥΣΕ ΠΑΚΑΤΑ
ΕΗΝΘΡΕΠΤΕΙΡΑΝ
ΓΛΥΚΕΡΗΝ
ΑΓΙΑΝΕΝΧ$\overline{\text{ΡΩ}}$

This inscription, copied from a sarcophagus of the fourth or fifth century, may be read: — "Here lies Paulina in the place of the blessed ; — Pacata, to whom she was nurse, buried her, an amiable and holy person. — In Christ."

The second circumstance of note connected with the phrase "in cemeterio Balbinæ," is the use of the term *cemetery*, derived from the Greek κοιμητηριον, a sleeping-place. In this auspicious word, now for the first time applied to the tomb, there is manifest a sense of hope and immortality, the result of a new religion. A star had risen on the borders of the grave, dispelling the horror of darkness which had hitherto reigned there: the prospect beyond was now cleared up, and so dazzling was the view of an eternal city "sculptured in the sky," that numbers were found eager to rush through the gate of martyrdom, for the hope of entering its starry portals.

St. Paul speaks of the Christian as one not intended to sorrow as others who had no hope. How literally *their* sorrow was described by him, may be judged from the following Pagan inscription, copied from the right hand wall of the Lapidarian Gallery:—

C. IVLIVS. MAXIMVS
ANN. II. M. V.
ATROX O FORTVNA TRVCI QVAE FVNERE GAVDES
QVID MIHI TAM SVBITO MAXIMVS ERIPITVR
QVI MODO IVCVNDUS GREMIO SVPERESSE SOLEBAT
HIC LAPIS IN TVMVLO NUNC IACET ECCE MATER.

Caius Julius Maximus
(aged)
2 years and 5 months.
O relentless Fortune, who delightest in cruel Death,
Why is Maximus so suddenly snatched from me?
He, who lately used to lie joyful on my bosom.
This stone now marks his tomb—behold his mother.

But the Christian, not content with styling his burial-ground a sleeping-place, pushes the notion of a slumber to its full extent. We find the term in a Latin dress, as—

DORMITIO ELPIDIS

The sleeping-place (dormitory) of Elpis." (Fabretti, lib. 8.)

Elsewhere it is said, that—

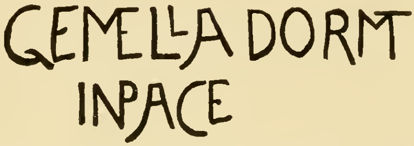
VICTORINA DORMIT.

Victorina sleeps. (Boldetti.)

ZOTICVS HIC AD DORMIENDVM.

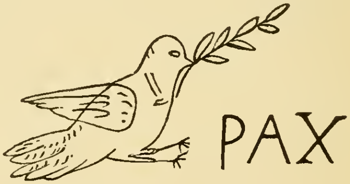
Zoticus here laid to sleep. (Boldetti.)

Of another we read—


GEMELLA DORMIT
INPACE

Gemella sleeps in peace. (Lapidarian Gallery.)

And, lastly, we find the certainty of a resurrection, and other sentiments equally befitting a Christian, expressed in the following (copied literatim from the Lapidarian Gallery):



HIC MIHI SEMPER DOLOR ERIT IN AEVO
ET TVVM BENERABILEM BVLTVM LICEAT VIDERE SO—ORE
CONIVNX ALBANAQVE MIHI SEMPER CASTA PVDICA
RELICTVM ME TVO GREMIO QVEROR
QVOD MIHI SANCTVM TE DEDERAT DIVINITVS AVTOR
RELICTIS TVIS IACES IN PACE SOPORE
MERITA RESVRGIS γ TEMPORALIS TIBI DATA REQVETIO
QVE VIXIT ANNIS XLV MENV· DIES XIII
DEPOSITA IN PACE FECIT PLACVS γ MARITVS

PEACE.

This grief will always weigh upon me: may it be granted me to behold in sleep your revered countenance. My wife Albana, always chaste and modest, I grieve over the loss of your support:

for our Divine Author gave you to me as a sacred (boon). You, well-deserving one, having left your (relations), lie in peace—in sleep—you will arise—a temporary rest is granted you. She lived forty-five years, five months, and thirteen days: buried in peace. Placus, her husband, set up this.

Nor was the hope of the Christians confined to their own bosoms. They published it abroad to the world, in a manner which, while it provoked the scorn and malice of many, proved also a powerful inducement to others to join their community. The dismal annihilation taught by the Pagans, or the uncertain Elysium, which, though received by the uneducated, was looked upon as matter of superstition by the learned, had in it something so utterly unsuited to the wants and longings of mankind, that the spectacle of a Christian, thoroughly assured of a future state, so blessed and so certain as to have power to draw him irresistibly towards it through the extremest tortures, must have awakened in the heart of many a wishing doubting Pagan, a feeling in favour of Christianity not easily suppressed. But in the more infuriated persecutors the martyr's triumphant exit only stirred up a desperate desire to deprive him of his last expectation; and connecting the interment of the body with the prospect of its being restored to life, they thought by preventing the one, to cut off all hope of the other. In the well-known epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne, descriptive of their sufferings during the persecution of Antonine in the second century, this last effort of malice on the part of their enemies is noticed.

"The bodies of the martyrs having been contumeliously treated and exposed for six days, were burnt and reduced to ashes, and scattered by the wicked into the Rhone, that no part of them might appear on the earth any more. And they did these things, as if they could prevail against God, and prevent the resurrection of the saints: and that they might, as they expressed it, destroy the hope of a future life,—'on which relying they introduce a new and strange religion, despise the most excruciating tortures, and die with joy. Now let us see if they will rise again, and if their God can help them and deliver them out of our hands.'"[*]

The custom of burying was brought to Rome from the East, where the Jewish converts had inherited it. According to Prudentius, the prospect of a resurrection was the motive of the honours paid to the departed; "There will soon come an age when genial warmth shall revisit these bones, and the soul will resume its former tabernacle, animated with living blood. The inert corpses, long since corrupted in the tomb, shall be borne through the 'thin air[†],' in company with the souls. For this reason is such care bestowed upon the sepulchre; such honour paid to the motionless limbs—such luxury displayed in funerals. We spread the linen cloth of spotless white—myrrh and frankincense embalm the body. What mean these excavated rocks? what these fair monuments? What, but that the object intrusted to them is sleeping, and not dead. * * * * * * We will adorn the hidden bones with violets and many a bough; and on the epitaph and the cold stones, we will sprinkle liquid odours."

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[*] Eusebii Hist. Eccles. lib. v. cap. 1. This event is noticed by Tertullian, some years later. "To this day the Gauls do not bathe in their own Rhone." Ad Nationes, lib. i. c. 17.

[†] "Volucres rapientur in auras." Cathemerinon, Hymn x.

The ceremonies performed on these occasions are alluded to by authors of the time. So Paulinus of Nola says, " Let them carefully sprinkle the tomb of the martyr with spikenard, and bring medicated ointments to the holy grave." The " Acts" of Tarachus represent the Prefect Maximus as saying, " You fancy, wickedest of men, that those women of yours will obtain your body after your death, in order to preserve it with spices and ointments. But I will find some way of exterminating your very dust."* Boldetti perceived an odour of spices on opening some of the graves. Tertullian, in answer to the objection made by the political economists of his day, that the new religion was unfavourable to commerce, exclaims, " Is not incense brought from a distance ? If Arabia should complain, tell the Sabeans that more of their merchandise, and that of a more expensive quality, is employed in burying Christians than in fumigating the gods."†

It is now time to set before the reader the present appearance of the subterranean cemeteries. In the greater number of galleries, the height is about eight or ten feet, and the width from four to six: in the annexed drawing the author has attempted express their usual appearance.

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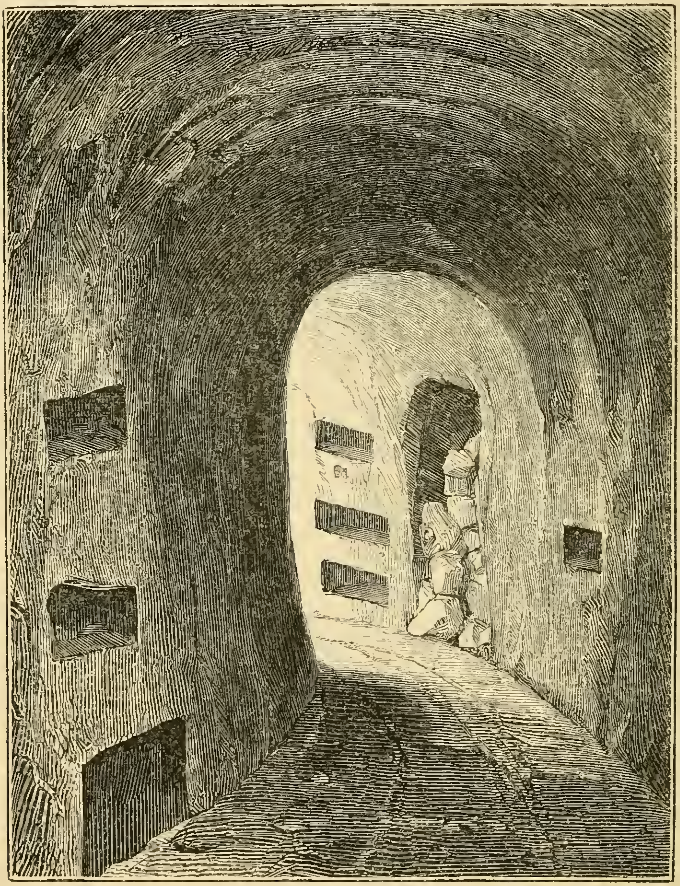
* Ruinart, Acta Tarachi, Probi, &c.

† Apologeticus, cap. 42.

The graves are cut in the walls, either in a straggling line, or in tiers, represented by D'Agincourt as occasionally amounting to six. The large grave at the bottom of the drawing is a bisomum, cut downwards as well as inwards in the tufa. Further back is seen a branch of the gallery, walled off with stones to prevent accidents, which still occa-



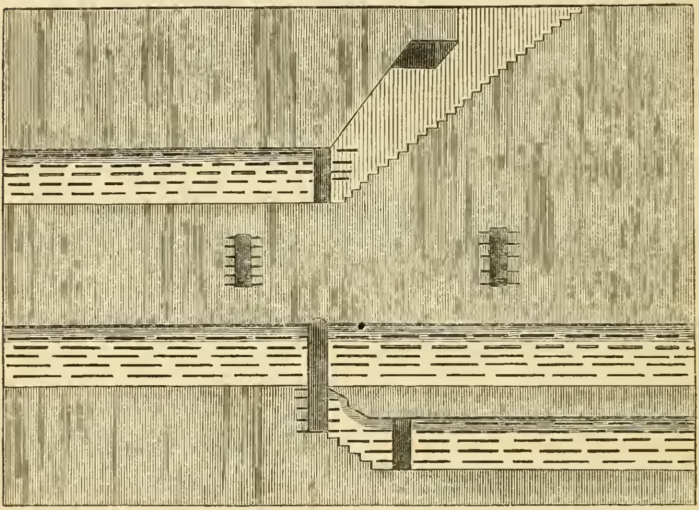
INTERIOR OF A CATACOMB.

sionally happen to those who penetrate much beyond the entrance. The daylight finding its way into the mouth of the cavern, as described by Prudentius, serves to render visible the rifled sepulchres. There is seen in the more distant part of the gallery, a small square hole, in which was originally deposited a cup.

Antiquarians have not succeeded in explaining the fact, that most of the graves near the entrance of the catacombs are so small as scarcely to allow room for the body of a child. The want of solidity in the material prevented the excavators from completing the graves before they were required, since the falling in of the soil would have destroyed their form; it is therefore possible that these small cells may have been the commencement of large graves, from various causes left unfinished. Boldetti found some branches of the catacombs with the intended sepulchres merely sketched upon the walls.

The galleries often run in stories two or three deep, communicating with each other by flights of steps. The plan of such a catacomb is here copied from D'Agincourt, vol. iv. pl. ix.

At the top is seen the entrance, an oblique gallery with steps: on reaching a certain depth, this passage takes a horizontal direction, giving off a lateral branch. Below it are seen the sections of two corridors running towards the spectator; and still lower, communicating with each other by a staircase, are two others parallel with the upper-most. All these appear completely filled with graves, to the number of five and even six tiers.



The steps leading downwards are mentioned by Prudentius in a passage already quoted; and both he and Jerome describe the numerous perpendicular shafts by which the subterranean ways were lighted. Many of these communications with the upper air are of a date more recent than the times of persecution, and would have been fatal to the safety of the refugees. Boldetti supposes them to have been made by sinking pits for the extraction of sand; but Rœstell, adducing the fact that they are found in Christian additions, thinks them made to admit light.* At the present time, many such holes are found in the Campagna near Rome, proving dangerous to the incautious rider. D'Agincourt availed himself of them on several occasions to enter the catacombs. Some of those examined by the writer seem to have been produced by the falling in of the roof of a gallery carried too near the surface. On the other hand, it is probable, that some of the light holes, called in the Acts of the Martyrs, *luminaria cryptæ*, were in existence during the persecutions. In one version of the Acts of Marcellinus and Peter, it is said that "Candida, a saint and a virgin, having been thrown down the precipice, (that is, the lighthole of the crypt), was overwhelmed with stones." Chapels lighted by shafts are now termed *cubicula clara.*

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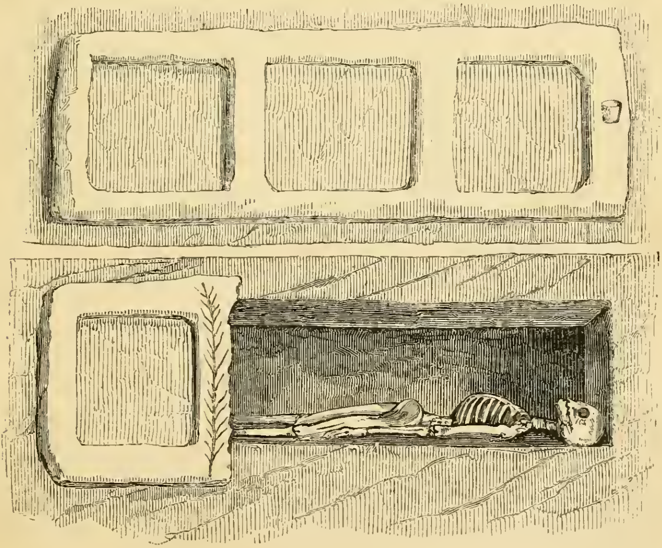
* Bunsen's Rome, vol. i. p. 365.

In the subjoined view copied from Boldetti, are



seen two graves: one still closed by three slabs of terra cotta, cemented to the rock; and the other partially opened, so as to display the skeleton lying within. It must not be supposed that in all cases the slabs were of terra cotta, or that their usual number was three; pieces of marble of the most irregular figure were often employed. The palm branch is merely scratched upon the plaster.

The number of graves contained in the catacombs is very great. In order to form an estimate of it, we must remember that, from the first century to some time after the year 400, the whole Christian population of Rome was buried there: this time includes nearly a century after the establishment of Christianity under Constantine. The number of Christians in Rome, even in the time of Decius, may be estimated at about thirty or forty thousand; and the horror of violating sepulchres, inherited from the Pagans, would effectually prevent the custom, common in our own country, of employing the same ground for fresh interments after the lapse of a few years. But although the tombs once occupied were left untouched by after generations, the multitude of bodies thrown into one sepulchre in times of danger, must have diminished the number of separate graves. Prudentius, in his hymn on the martyrdom of Hippolitus, describes the appearance of the cemeteries in his own time:—"We have seen in the city of Romulus innumerable remains of saints: you ask, Valerian, what epitaphs are chiselled upon the tombs, and what are the names of those buried? a question difficult for me to answer. So great a host of the just did the impious rage of the heathen sweep away, when Trojan Rome worshipped her country's gods. Many sepulchres marked with letters display the name of the martyr, or some anagram. There are also dumb stones closing silent tombs, which tell only the number buried within. So that we know how many human bodies lie in the heap, though we read no names belonging to them. I remember finding that sixty were buried under one mound, whose names Christ alone preserves, as those of his peculiar friends."* Tombs of this sort are called Polyandria: they are mostly found in the cemetery of Marcellinus, and appear to be an imitation of the Pagan *puticuli*. They furnished to some travellers an argument against the Christian character of the catacombs; but the testimony of Prudentius living in the fourth century, effectually silences such reasoning.

An inscription, sometimes considered to belong to a Polyandrium, is the following: —

MARCELLA ET CHRISTI
MARTYRES
CCCCCL.

Marcella and five hundred and fifty martyrs of Christ.

The apparent impossibility of collecting such an "army of martyrs" into one grave, makes it probable that the epitaph is a votive tablet, raised in later times to the victims of a persecution collectively. Rœstell is inclined to consider such epitaphs as commemorative of the martyrs of a past age.†

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* Peristephanon, Hymn iv.

† Bunsen's Rome, vol. i. p. 372.

He gives another, found in the cemetery of St. Lucina:—

N · XXX · SYRRA · ET SENEC · COSS:

which has furnished matter of debate to the learned. It was first supposed that this fragment was part of a numerical arrangement of the graves; but since Visconti has shown that no such system existed, it is absurd to imagine one grave numbered alone. But Visconti endeavoured to prove that it referred to some thirty martyrs who suffered during the consultate of Syrra and Senecio. The same view is taken by Rœstell and Raoul Rochette. The author is inclined to adopt a more simple method of explaining the N·XXX; reading the words as the fragment of

QVI VIXIT ANN. XXX SYRRA ET SENEC · COSS.

Who lived thirty years. In the consulate of Syrra and Senecio; that is, A. D. 102.

This form of inscription is common, and may be seen in the following:—

AVRELIA DVLCISSIMA FILIA QUAE
DE SAECVLO RECESSIT VIXIT ANN · XV · M · IIII·
SEVERO ET QUINTIN COSS ·

Aurelia, our sweetest daughter, who departed from the world, Severus and Quintinus being consuls. She lived fifteen years and four months. (A. D. 235.)

The consular epitaphs are our principal means of fixing the dates of graves and cemeteries. That belonging to A. D. 102 is the earliest that we possess, with the exception of one of doubtful character found by Boldetti.

D. M.
P. LIBERIO VICXIT
ANI N. II. MENSES N. III.
DIES N. VIII. R. ANICIO
FAUSTO ET VIRIO GALLO
COSS.

To the Divine Manes. Publius Liberius lived two years, three months, and eight days. Anicius Faustus and Virius Gallus being consuls. That is, A. D. 98.

But this inscription is almost certainly pagan, and may be classed among those that are found upon the reverse of tablets afterwards used by the Christians.

After these comes one of A. D. 111.

SERVILIA ANNORVM · XIII
PIS · ET BOL · COSS ·

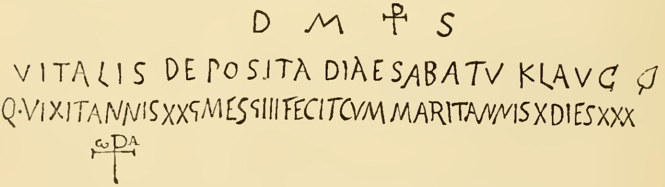
Servilia, aged thirteen. In the consulate of Piso and Bolanus.

Subsequently to this time, the consular epitaphs become more common.

The following consulates have been copied, without selection, from the Christian inscriptions contained in the Vatican Library and Lapidarian Gallery; they show the usual dates of the consular epitaphs:

	A. D.
Cæsarius and Atticus - - - -	397
Victor and Valentinianus - - -	369
Cl. Julianus Aug. and Sallustius - -	363
Marcellinus and Probinus - - -	341
Datianus and Cerealis - - - -	358
Valentinianus and Valens Aug. III. - -	370

In the inscription to Liberius, the letters D.M. have been commonly rendered Deo Maximo, because found in a Christain cemetery. They are also a contraction of the first words of a Pagan epitaph, Diis manibus—to the Divine manes—or souls of the dead. An argument has been drawn from these letters, against the assertion that no heathen graves are contained in the catacombs. But many inscriptions beginning with D. M., are undoubtedly Christian; and, besides the probability of these letters being here put for Deo Maximo, it is possible that the ignorance of the sculptor led him to continue the old heathen formula, neither understanding its meaning, nor reflecting upon its unsuitableness to a Christian grave. A decisive specimen of this sort of inscription is found in a wall of the Vatican Library.



D M ⳨ S

VITALIS DEPOSITA DIAESABATV KLAVG

Q·VIXITANNISXXϛMESϛIIIIFECITCVM MARITANNISXDIESXXX

ω⳨A

Sacred to Christ, the Supreme God.

Vitalis, buried on Saturday, kalends of August, aged twenty-five years and eight months. She lived with her husband ten years and thirty days. In Christ, the First and the Last.*

There is a Christian epitaph quoted by Rœstell, which runs as follows:

Diis manibus
Principio filio dulcissimo suo posuit,
Quæ vixit ann. vj. dies xx.
In pace.

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* By the ancient church, Saturday was styled the Sabbath, and Sunday, the Lord's day.

On this he remarks, "It is possible that the words Diis manibus are attributable to a careless imitation of heathen customs in the fifth or sixth century; or that the inscription, originally pagan, was afterwards affixed to a Christian grave with the alteration of the numbers and of the proper name." * There is still an alternative, that a Pagan borrowed from Christianity the consolatory phrase, *in pace.*

The employment of old Pagan tombstones was common after the time of Constantine; but the usual custom in such cases was to reverse the marble, and to engrave the Christian epitaph upon the opposite side. According to antiquarians, many stones have been discovered with unequivocal marks of Paganism on one side, and of Christianity on the other; but of this there is now no opportunity of judging, as the catacomb tablets are all plastered upon walls or pillars.

It is not to be expected, that persons so uneducated as many of those whose monuments have come down to us, should have always avoided the heathen usages, in the practice of which they had grown up. Besides the D. M., such expressions as the following are occasionally found:—

DOMVS ETERNALIS
AVRCHSI ET AVRILAR
ITATIS CONPARIM
EES FECIMVS NOBIS

An eternal home, &c. (Lap. Gall.)

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* Raoul Rochette thinks the last suggestion of very little value: the Christian sculptor should have erased the objectionable letters with the rest.—Mém. de l'Acad. de Belles Lettres, tom. xiii.

The form of expression is somewhat varied in the next, which is copied from a wall of the Vatican Library.

AVRELIO FELICI QVI BIXIT CUM COIVCE ·
AN·NOS·X·VIII DULCIS · IN COIVGIO ·
BONE MEMORIE BIXIT · ANNOS · L · V ·
RAPTVS ETERNE DOMVS · XII KAL. IENVARIAS

In peace. To Aurelius Felix, who lived with his wife eighteen years in sweetest wedlock. Of good memory. He lived fifty-five years. Snatched home eternally on the twelfth day before the kalends of January.

These inscriptions do not imply any want of belief in the resurrection on the part of those who erected them. The word *home* is thus used in Ecclesiastes—"Man goeth to his long home:" and both Job and David employ similar expressions—"I shall go the way whence I shall not return;" and, "Before I go hence, and be no more." The phrase "æterna quies" is found in heathen inscriptions.

The leaf often seen on gravestones is employed by way of punctuation, or merely as an ornament. It has been mistaken for the symbol of an afflicted heart, pierced with an arrow; but it is simply borrowed from the Pagans, who used it as a comma.

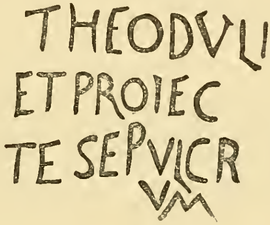
Other terms were applied to the grave by Christians; as

DEPOSSIO CAMPANI · X
FLAVIO STELICONE VIRO INC

The burial place of Campanus. Flavius Stelico being Consul, (viro inclyto), i. e. either in the year 400 or 405. (Lap. Gall.)

SVSANNA COMPARA
VIT MEMORIAM QVIE
VIT DIE VII KAL AVGVSTAR
CONSS CAESARIO ET ATTICO

Susanna bought herself a *memoria:* she rested on the seventh day before the kalends of August; Cæsarius and Atticus being consuls (i. e. 397.). (Aringhi.)



THEODVLI
ET PROIEC
TE SEPVLCR
VM

The sepulchre of Theodulus and Projecta. (Lap. Gall.)

B · M
CVBICVLVM · AVRELIAE · MARTINAE CASTISSIMAEADQVE · PUDI
CISSIMAE FEMINAE QUE FECIT · IN COIVGIO ANN. XXIII D XIIII
BENE MERENTI · QVE · VIXIT · ANN · XL · M . XI · D · XIII · DEPOSITIO EIS
DIE · III · NONAS · OCT · NEPOTIANO · ET FACVNDO CONSS · IN PACE

[For B. M. read Bene Merenti.]—To the well-deserving. The chamber of Aurelia Martina, my wife most chaste and modest, who lived in wedlock twenty-three years and fourteen days. To the well-deserving one, who lived forty years, eleven months, and thirteen days. Her burial was on the third before the nones of October. Nepotianus and Facundus being consuls (i. e. 336). In peace. (Lap. Gall.)

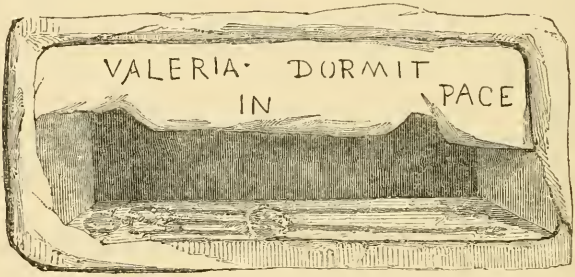
This inscription nearly approaches the usual Pagan form.

Occasionally, the proper name alone was expressed; as

ACAPE

(Lap. Gall.)

The next drawing, displaying a tomb closed by a single slab, is copied from D'Agincourt.



Dust is seen lying on the lower wall of the cell, resembling the shadow of a skeleton. "Pulvis et umbra sumus."

It has excited surprise among some, that a persecuted sect should have had the facilities of burial which the Christians seem to have enjoyed; and should have succeeded in obtaining the bodies of the martyrs, in order to honour them with a decent funeral. These facts are accounted for by the great attention paid by the early Christians to the subject of interment. During the Decian persecution, the Roman presbyters exhorted their brethren at Carthage to beware lest the bodies of the martyrs should remain unburied. In the persecution under Antonine, Praxedes and Pudentiana spent their whole patrimony in relieving the poor, and burying the martyrs. A manuscript, found by Aringhi, confirms this statement; as well as an inscription discovered in the catacombs, probably belonging to the fifth century: —

HOC EST COEMETERIVM
PRISCILLAE
IN QVO EXISTVNT CORPORA
TRIVM MILLIVM MARTYRVM
MARTYRIO
PER ANTONINVM IMPERATOREM
AFFECTORVM QVOS S · PVDENTIANA
FECIT IN HOC SVO VENERABILI
TEMPLO SEPELIRI &c.

This is the cemetery of Priscilla, in which are the bodies of three thousand martyrs, who suffered under the Emperor Antonine. Whom St. Pudentiana caused to be buried in this her own place of worship. (Aicher, Hortus Inscriptionum.)

It must be confessed, that this inscription is of no great value as an accurate record of the Antonine persecution, being set up about three hundred years later. Nor can we attach much importance to the story of Hiero, related by Metaphrastes. The Christians, he tells us, were allowed to bury the body of the martyr, but were forced to buy the head for its weight in gold.

The Jews, as in the case of our Lord, of Stephen, and of Paul when stoned, left the body to the disposal of friends. At times, when the patient endurance of the sufferer had exasperated his Pagan persecutors, the body was refused in revenge for the defeat they had sustained. Prudentius, in describing the martyrdom of St. Vincent, represents the judge as hearing of his peaceful death with a degree of disappointed malice, which he (the poet) can scarcely find words to describe.* "You would suppose that the dragon was raging disarmed, with his teeth broken,—'he has gone off triumphant,' he exclaims, 'and as a rebel has carried away the palm. But a last resource remains: to punish his lifeless body; to deliver his carcase to the beasts, to give it to be devoured by dogs. I will extirpate his very bones, lest a sepulchre be granted them: lest the congregation should honour it, and raise a martyr's epitaph.'"

Not only the importance attached to burial, but also the feeling of reverence for the dead, afterwards became excessive. Sepulchres and remains, even in the fourth century, formed an object of veneration, and were almost considered a means of grace. "It is scarcely known," observes Prudentius about the year 390, "how full Rome is of buried saints: how richly the metropolitan soil abounds in holy sepulchres. But we who are not so blessed, and cannot behold around us the traces of blood, nevertheless look up from afar unto heaven."† It had been well for Christendom, if the ashes of the martyrs had been always left in that obscurity, to which the primitive Church thought proper to consign them.

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* Peristephanon, Hymn II.

"At Christiani nominis
Hostem coquebant inrita
Fellis venena, et lividum
Cor efferata exusserant."

† Hymn III. 541.

During the long period of tranquillity which occurred between the sixth and seventh persecutions, Callistus greatly enlarged and improved the Sebastian catacombs, from which circumstance they were called the cemetery of Callistus. The entrance to them is through the Basilica of St. Sebastian on the Appian way, about two miles beyond the gate of the city. Notwithstanding the little credence usually given to the story of Sebastian, there seems no reason for doubting that part of it which relates to the manner of his death. It is important in such cases to distinguish between the legend of antiquity, and the story as embellished by the fervid imagination of the painters' age. Artists have vied with one another in representing the youthful martyr in a state of seraphic abstraction: the half-draped figure pierced with arrows, the closing eyes already fixed on heavenly glories, and the face lighted up with unearthly smiles, or darkening with the shadow of death, offered capabilities which Guido and the Caracci cannot be accused of having neglected. From the habit of adding to the picture angels with crowns and palms, and of introducing some glaring anachronism, such as the presence of the Virgin Mary, or John the Baptist, we are often led to consider the whole as a fable; yet, on inspecting the catacombs, the existence of Sebastian is found to rest on good evidence. A small cell has been preserved as the chapel built over the grave of the martyr; and above this have been accumulated all the honours which can be paid to a saint and a hero. Perpendicularly above the grave stands the high altar of the Basilica, with a marble representation of the dead saint, the size of life. Below ground is a beautiful bust by Bernini; and the fine church over the entrance, as well as the catacomb itself, perpetuate the name of Sebastian. According to the Acts of his martyrdom, this young officer was shot to death by arrows, but was miraculously restored to life and health. Not content with the glory of one martyrdom, he presented himself to the authorities; and after a second execution, his body was concealed in a sewer and hung upon a hook that it might not escape again. He contrived, however, to reveal the secret to a woman by a dream, in consequence of which he was buried in the catacomb now called after him.*

The internal management of the cemeteries now demands our attention.

"The first order among the clergy," says Jerome, "is that of the Fossors, who, after the manner of holy Tobit, are employed in burying the dead." Besides the epitaphs proper to fossors, there are many other inscriptions which allude to them as having sold the tomb to the deceased or his friends. Their importance, as well as the nature of the duties entrusted to them, will be more obvious when we have compared the funeral regulations of the Pagans with those of the Christians.

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* From lying in a sewer, painters have promoted their favourite to the place formerly occupied by the Bacchus and Adonis, the Ganymede and Endymion of Pagan art. In like manner the Magdalen has supplanted the Venus, while St. Cecilia has taken a place among the Muses.

Let us take, as an illustration of the former, this inscription (copied from a MS. collection in Rome).

❦ D ❦ M ❦
Q ❦ MEDIOVS ❦ AVG ❦ LIB
ASOLO SIBI ❦ FECIT ❦
HOC CEPOTAFIV QVI
NTA VITALIS FILIA MEA
POSSIDEBIT SINE CONTRO
❦ VERSIA ❦

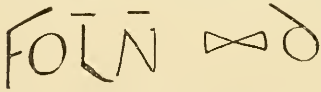
To the Divine Manes. Quintus Meiolus, freed-man of Augustus, made this cepotaph for himself alone. Quinta Vitalis, my daughter, shall possess it without controversy.

The word cepotaph is derived from the Greek *κηποταφιον*, a tomb in a garden. As cinerary urns occupied little space, and were productive of no inconvenience to the neighbourhood, the ashes of the dead were generally deposited in the garden or court-yard of the house, in a small chamber built for that purpose. The columbaria, now existing in Rome, show this custom on a larger scale. One of them, very lately discovered, is capable of containing three hundred urns. The niches for these, disposed round the walls in horizontal rows, give the chamber the appearance of a dove-cote, whence the name *columbarium*. In the sepulchre of the Abucci, described by Sponius, the urns are numbered. One of the inscriptions is here copied:

L · ABVCCIVS HERMES IN HOC
ORDINE AB IMO AD SVMMVM
COLVMBARIA IX OLLAE XIIX
SIBI POSTERIS QVE SVIS

Lucius Abuccius Hermes, in this row, No. 9 from the bottom of the columbarium upwards; urn No. 18. For himself and his descendants. (Sponii Miscellanea Erud. Antiquitatis).

A few forms of inscription were recognised as regular bequests of this sort of property: among them are; "et posteris suis"—"hæredes hoc monumentum sequitur"—"liberis libertabusque suis"—as well as their initials e. p. s.—h. h. m. s.—l. l. q. s., and others. But with the Christians, who required larger space and a more secluded situation for the decomposition of an entire body, a different system was necessarily adopted. The catacombs were placed under the management of a number of *fossors*, probably sand-diggers by trade, who, besides excavating graves and squaring the galleries, served also as guides. Their power of disposing of the graves is well exemplified in the following Christian inscription, which the author copied literatim from a small collection on the walls of the Capitol.

EMPTVM LOCUM A BARTEMISTVM
VISOMVM HOC EST ET PRETIVM
DATVM A FOSSORI HILARO ID EST
 PRESENTIA SEVERI
FOSS ET LAVRENT

The place bought by Bartemistus, that is, a bisomum; and the price paid to the fossor Hilarus, the sum of fourteen hundred folles (amounting to 1*l.* 2*s.* 7*d.*), in the presence of the fossors Severus and Lawrence.*

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* The *folis*, or *follis*, here specified, is a small Roman coin, seldom mentioned in history. Hotman professes himself unable to decide upon its value, and merely states that it was a very

To estimate better the value of such a sum as 1*l.* 2*s.* 7*d.* in those times, we may compare with this epitaph one contained in Wordsworth's Pompeian Inscriptions, in which the sum of H.S.LXV, nine shillings and sixpence, is offered for the recovery of a lost wine vessel. The thirty pieces of silver received by Judas amounted to 3*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.*

The author has not met with any other inscription, recording the price of a tomb: what makes this epitaph of Bartemistus the more valuable on the score of authenticity, is the circumstance that though the transaction is clearly stated, the sum is expressed in a very unusual manner, the *follis* being a Latin version of the Greek φολλεις, probably introduced in the time of the later Cæsars.

Gruter has published a Pagan inscription, which, though not setting a price upon the tomb, imposes a fine upon the violator of it. "If any one shall wish to sell or give away this sepulchre or monument with the house (attached), after my death, or to lay therein another body, he shall pay to the Pontifex

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thin lamina of metal, probably the lowest coin used. Facciolati defines it as synonymous with the quadrans or teruntius; of which, according to Ainsworth, forty make a denarius, value sevenpence three farthings of our money. The numerals attached are not quite correctly written: the first of them is meant either for the two CↃ put for 1000, or the elongated ⨯ of the same signification. Between these the sculptor seems to have hesitated, and the reader may indulge in the same uncertainty, without affecting the value of the figure. After 1000, the number of hundreds naturally follows: and the sign used most nearly corresponds to the , a variety of G, the abbreviation for 400.

Maximus the fine of twenty sesterces:" about three shillings.*

The use of the preposition *a* before the dative case, in some of the preceding epitaphs, is remarkable: it seems to indicate an approximation to the Italian language, of which it is an established element.

IOVINVS · SIBICOM
PARAVIT · ABICTORI
NO · BISOMV · LOCVET
EXVPERV COLLEGAIPSI

Jovinus bought himself a bisomum from Victorinus and Exuperus his colleague. In Christ. (Lap. Gall.)

To this inscription, the term epitaph can scarcely be applied; it is rather a legal conveyance of a portion of the cemetery.

Some inscriptions appear to have been executed in part at the time of the purchase, and concluded after the burial. There is one of this character in the Lapidarian Gallery.

HIC REQIECET
SAMSO IN BISO
MVM ET VCTORV
SE VIVA VXOREIVS

Here rests Samso in a bisomum, and Victoria his wife, she being alive.

We may infer from this some such family history as the following: — Samso, the husband of

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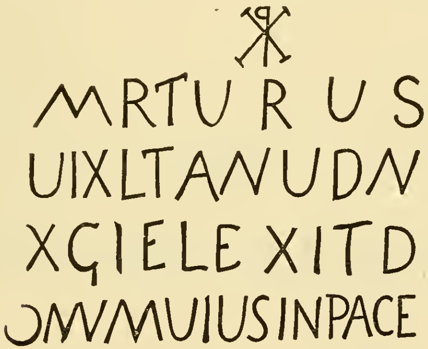
* Inscriptions, p. 672. " Si quis hoc sepulchrum vel monumentum cum ædificio universo post obitum meum vendere vel donare voluerit, vel corpus alienum invehere vellit, dabit pœnae nomine, ark. pontif. H. S. xx."

Victoria, not having provided himself with a tomb, was left to the care of his widow for burial. She then purchased a bisomum, and having interred her husband, set up a stone to record that there rested Samso; adding *in a bisomum*, to reserve a place for herself. After her death the inscription was completed; the insertion of the words *herself being alive*, showing that as a respectable woman she had, during her lifetime, provided for her burial.

In the annexed, a Roman Christian is exhibited as selecting the site of his future sepulchre.

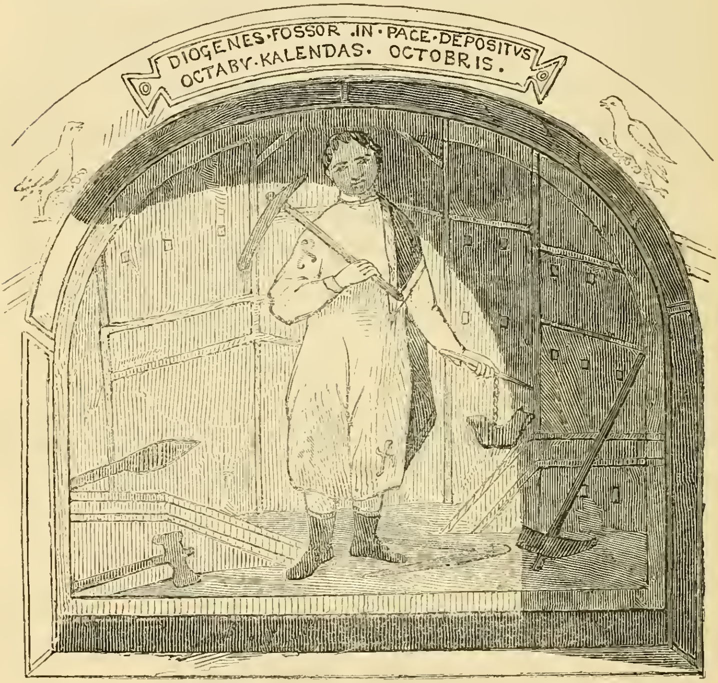


MRTU R U S
UIXLTANUDN
XCIELEXITD
ƆNVMUIUSINPACE

Read—In Christo. Martyrius vixit annos plus minus xci. elexit domum vivus, in pace. (Lap. Gallery.)

In Christ. Martyrius lived ninety-one years, more or less. He chose a home during his life-time. In peace.

There existed formerly on the walls of the catacombs many paintings, representing individuals of the lowest class, employed in excavating an overhanging rock, with a lamp suspended from the summit. One of these paintings, copied in the *Roma Sotteranea*, has the words Fossor Trofimus added. A better executed drawing was found by Boldetti, in the cemetery of Callistus.


DIOGENES·FOSSOR ·IN·PACE·DEPOSITVS
OCTABV·KALENDAS· OCTOBRIS .

The inscription is—"Diogenes the Fossor, buried in peace on the eighth before the kalends of October."

On either side is seen a dove with an olive branch, the common emblem of Christian peace. The pickaxe and lamp together plainly designate the subterranean excavator: while the spike by which the lamp is suspended from the rock, the cutting instruments and compasses used for marking out the graves, and the chapel lined with tombs among which the fossor stands, mark as distinctly the whole routine of his occupation, as the cross on his dress, his Christian profession. The painting is on a retiring part of the wall, and beneath it is the opening of a grave.

From the instruments represented in this valuable painting, as well as from the testimony of authors, we conclude that the fossors were employed to excavate and adorn parts of the catacombs. A great portion of their work must have been connected with the chapels, which were very numerous, and afterwards became elaborate in their details. This rude attempt of a contemporary artist to represent the occupation of a poor Christian, employed in burying in secret the deceased members of a community, to whom no place on the face of the earth was granted for their long home, suggests some serious reflections on the change which Christendom has since undergone. Could we imagine the humble Diogenes, whom we see engaged in his melancholy task, to look out from the entrance to the crypt, and behold, in their present splendour, the domes and palaces of Christian Rome; to see the cross which *he* could only wear in secret on his coarse woollen tunic, glittering from every pinnacle of the eternal city; how would he hail the arrival of a promised millennium, and confidently infer the abolition of idolatrous service! Glowing with the zeal of the Cyprianic age, he hastes to the nearest temple, to give thanks for the marvellous change: he stops short at the threshold, for by a strange mistake he has encountered incense and images and the purple-bearing train of the Pontifex Maximus. What remains for him, but to wander solitary beside the desolate Tiber, by those "waters of Babylon to sit down and weep," while he remembers his ancient Sion?

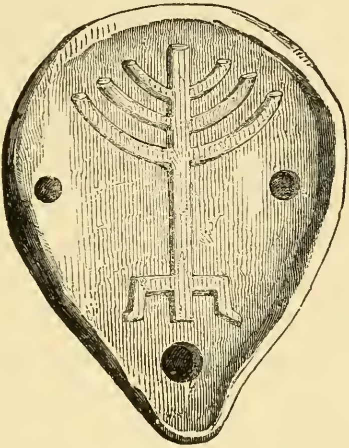
Besides the cemetery of Callistus, those of SS. Agnes, Lawrence, Saturninus and Thraso, Marcellinus and Peter, and several others, have obtained celebrity. There is also a cemetery underneath the Basilica of St. Peter, on the Vatican hill; but it has been so overloaded with the productions of after ages, that little trace of the earlier centuries is left. Most of its present contents were deposited there when the new church of St. Peter's was built.

In addition to the Christian cemeteries, there was another appropriated to the Jews. It was discovered by Bosio, on the Via Portuense: he could find in it no signs of Christianity, and but one inscription, the word

ΣΥΝΑΓΩΓ

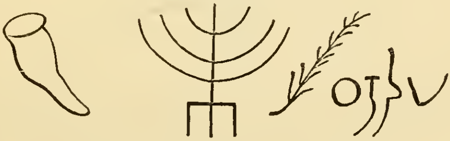
"Synagogue;" together with a lamp (of which a copy is annexed), having upon it a figure of the golden candlestick brought from Jerusalem by Titus.

Other representations of this candlestick have been found. Bosio says that they were commonly employed by the Jews, and occasionally by Christians: he quotes the observation of Josephus, that the figure represented heaven, the seven lamps standing for the sun and six planets. Lamps of terra cotta are found abundantly in the catacombs; they are generally marked with the cross, with the likenesses of Peter and Paul, or with some other Christian



symbol. There is another of these golden candlesticks figured by Buonarotti, with the addition of this mark, which probably represents a horn for oil.* Lastly, in a MS. collection lent to the author by a young Italian, who had compiled it from the Jesuits' College in Rome, there is an inscription of which the annexed is a fac-simile.

ΕΝΘΑΔΕ ΚΕΙ
ΤΑΙ ΦΑΥϹΤΙΝΑ



Here lies Faustina. In peace.

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[*] Perhaps one of the vessels carried about with lamps, when intended to be replenished from time to time. See Matth. xxv. "The wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."

This curious epitaph, written "in Hebrew, Greek and Latin," probably belonged to a Christian Jewess. The horn for oil is seen beside the golden candle stick. On the supposition of the woman having been a Hebrew, we must consider the Latin Faustina to be her Christian name: the palm branch added, is also a Christian symbol of victory and a well-spent life.* According to Aringhi, the Jews of Rome generally wrote in Greek. The Hebrew word added to the inscription cannot be interpreted without making some slight alteration in the form of the letters. The last seems intended for *mem;* and the first, by the addition of a small central line, would become *schin.* In reading the entire word as שלום *Shalom*, or Peace, we are supported by the custom of the early Christians, who were in the habit of adding to their epitaphs *in pace:* as in this fragment from the Lapidarian Gallery.

NPACE
†

In the peace of Christ.

The Greek version of this expression is also common, as in this:

ΕΥΤΡΟΠΟC ΕΝ ΙΡΗΝΗ.

Eutropus in peace. (Fabretti.)

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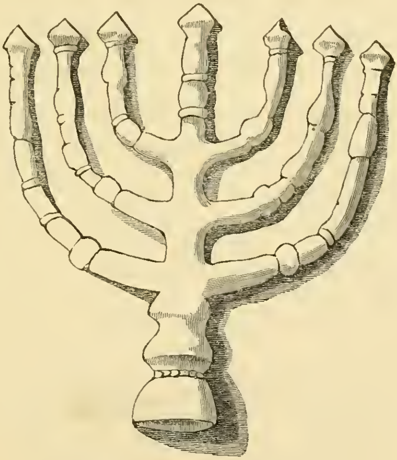
* The palm-branch may have been equally used by a Jew; the author of the second book of Esdras having copied from the Apocalypse the description of the palm-bearing multitude. "So I asked the angel, and said, Sir, what are these? He answered and said unto me, These be they that have put off the mortal clothing, and put on the immortal, and have confessed the name of God; now are they crowned, and receive palms." 2 Esdras, ii. 44, 45.

These figures of the golden candlestick were copied from the "Triumph of Titus," which represents the spolia opima taken from Jerusalem, on the way to the Capitol, to be deposited in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. On that arch of triumph, as if in everlasting scorn, the laurelled conquerors are still seen to bear away the golden candlestick, the table of shewbread, and the trumpets of the jubilee. How accurately the heathen sculptor has imitated his models, may be seen by a comparison of the work with the description left by Moses. The annexed cut is copied from the candlestick upon the arch.



This triumphal monument, considered as a testimony to the truth of the Mosaic mission, is of the highest value. The question on which it bears, is not one of yesterday, but of 3300 years ago; a time when the fields of Marathon were yet bloodless, and long before the golden fleece hung in the garden of Colchis. That the Jews constructed the expensive works which Moses required, that they preserved them in their sanctuary, and accurately reproduced them in a copy when destroyed, was indeed proved to the ancient Church by the discovery of the very objects in the temple. But this important fact might have been left to the pen of some legendary historian, to be mixed up with frauds and fables, or to moulder in illegible manuscripts, had not a heathen emperor, more zealous indeed for his own fame than for that of Moses, perpetuated in marble the sacred designs; and thus recorded in a language that needs no interpreter, that the Jews *did* believe in Moses, and ever preserved a memorial of the obedience which he exacted from them.

If the doctrines of Christianity are but sparingly expressed in the epitaphs of the catacombs, they are at least free from the Anacreontic language that characterises many Pagan tablets, a curious specimen of which is given by Gruter:

V · A · N · LVII
D · M
TI · CLAVDI · SECVNDI
HIC · SECVM · HABET · OMNIA
BALNEA · VINVM · VENVS
CORRVMPVNT · CORPORA ·
NOSTRA · SED · VITAM FACIVNT
B · V · V ·
KARO CONTVBERNALI
FEC · MEROPE CAES
ET SIBI ET SVIS P · E ·

To the Divine Manes of Titus Claudius Secundus, who lived

57 years. Here he enjoys every thing. Baths, wine, and love, ruin our constitution, but they make life. Farewell; farewell. To her dear companion, Merope Cæsarea has erected this. For themselves and their descendants.

Among the heathen customs which the ancient church forbore to imitate, is that of recording an imprecation upon the violator of a sepulchre. Sponius gives a specimen of the Pagan curse, in an epitaph found near the Aurelian gate of Rome.

C . IVLIVS . C . L
BARNAEVS
OLLA EIVS SI QVI
OVVIOLAVIT AD
(sic) IFEROS NON RECIPIATUR

Caius Julius Barnæus, freed-man of Caius; if any one violate his urn, let him not be received by the infernal gods. (Sponius, Miscell. sectio ix.)

Other Pagan imprecations are embodied in the phrases "ultimus suorum moriatur"—"habeat deos superos et inferos iratos." *

Nothing of this sort is to be found in the inscriptions of the ancient church, though towards the middle ages, even this remnant of paganism found its way into Christianity. The worst epitaph of the kind which has been preserved is the following, given by Aringhi:

MALE · PEREAT · INSEPVLTVS
IACEAT · NON · RESVRGAT
CVM · IVDA · PARTEM · HABEAT
SI · QVIS · SEPVLCHRVM · HVNC VIOLAVERIT.

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* Mabillon gives one of each kind; (Iter Italicum, 148.)

QVI HIC MIXERIT AVT CACARIT
HABEAT DEOS
SVPEROS ET INFEROS
IRATOS.

If any one violate this sepulchre, let him perish miserably, lie unburied, and not arise, but have his lot with Judas.

Another, less sulphureous, is preserved by Fabretti:

* * * GRAVIT AD XPM
* * * SEPVLCRVM VIOLARE
* ET SIT ALIENVS A REGNO DEI.

"* * * has gone to dwell with Christ. If any one dare to violate this grave, let him * * * and be far from the kingdom of God."

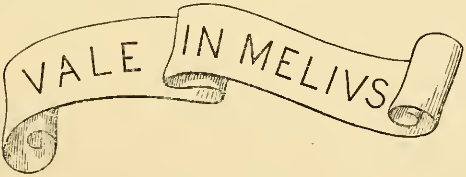
It would appear that these horrid imprecations were dictated by a fear lest the resurrection should be impeded by the dispersion of the remains: or that difficulties might be thrown in the way, by the superposition of a second body. Such feelings were not known to the ancient Christians, with whom the practice of burying husband and wife in the same bisomum was general. Ignatius hoped to be so completely devoured by the beasts that no fragment should remain to tempt his friends into danger. A curious epitaph found at Verona, probably not older than the seventh century, states why Felicianus wished a tomb reserved for himself alone: (Gruter.)

D. M.
FELICIANI · VERONEN
MIHIMET · FELICIANVS · VERONEN ·
SACRVM · CONST ·
QVI INQUIETVS VIXI
NVNC TANDEM MORTVVS
NON LVBENS QVIESCO
SOLVS CVR SIM QUAESERIS
VT · IN · DIE · CENSORIO · SINE
IMPEDIMENTO · FACILIVS
RESVRGAM

> To the Divine Manes of Felicianus of Verona. I, F[illegible]ianus, of Verona, have consecrated this tomb for myself. [illegible] who lived restless, being now at length dead, rest unwilli[illegible]. Do you ask why I am alone? That in the day of judgment I may more readily arise, without impediment.

Thus it is seen that the practice of defending property by imprecations originated with the Pagans, and was not, for several hundred years, suffered in the Church. During the middle ages, similar anathemas were occasionally inscribed in books: three instances, given in Maitland's Dark Ages, belong to the ninth and eleventh centuries: one of them resembles the epitaph "Male pereat" in containing an allusion to Judas: "If any one remove from the monastery this book, with the intention of not restoring it, let him receive the portion of everlasting damnation, with Judas the traitor, Annas, and Caiaphas." Truly, as Mr. Maitland has observed, "it was enough to frighten the possessor of a book, however honestly he might have come by it."

The phrase "insepultus jaceat" has been retained, or rather amplified, by the Church of Rome, in her usual form of cursing with bell, book, and candle: "Let them be buried with the burial of an ass, and be as dung on the face of the earth."



CHAP. IV.

THE MARTYRS OF THE CATACOMBS.

" Ad astra doloribus itur." PRUDENTIUS.

"THE noble army of martyrs praise thee: the holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee." In accordance with the spirit of these words the Church has ever shown a disposition to distinguish in a peculiar manner those who have shed their blood in defence of the faith. The honour paid to them in different times and places has varied, according to the genius of the age, and the amount of enthusiasm inherent in national character; but while truth is valued among men, it is impossible that *they* should be lightly esteemed, who, facing torments and death with resolution, purchased, not for themselves, but for others, the blessings of religious freedom. Notwithstanding the calumnies of enemies, and the inventions of mistaken friends, between which truth has materially suffered, it is certain that these soldiers of God have from time to time achieved the most glorious and permanent triumphs: in the great assaults made upon heathenism or superstition they have led the attack as the forlorn hope, and fallen victorious:

> "Strange conquest, where the conqueror must die,
> And he is slain that wins the victory;"

but in this they only shared the fate of their Master, a fate which might naturally be expected to await all His followers. What gratitude do we not owe to those who fought such fearful battles, to leave us in unhoped-for liberty and ease?

The merits of the martyrs can be appreciated by all mankind. The natural love of life, and the instinctive shrinking from pain belonging to our species, stamp a plain and intelligible value upon their tried courage. The consentient voice of the whole Church, registered in the canons of an œcumenical council, may be consigned to comparative oblivion: the arguments employed, or the ground of controversy itself, may be beyond the comprehension of nine-tenths of the world; but torture and death speak a language universally understood. Accordingly, we find that martyrs have been distinguished by posterity in a manner that casts into the shade the honours awarded to the heroes of secular history. What has been done for Leonidas or Camillus, for Regulus or for Julius Cæsar, in comparison with the monuments erected to St. Peter? Standing beside the high altar of his Basilica in Rome, we find it hard to believe that the stupendous object of our admiration is the mausoleum of a fisherman. Of the magnificent inscriptions raised to the great and the fortunate of this world, the proudest must yield to that which encircles the dome of St. Peter's. A conqueror of the habitable globe once wept at having reached the limits of his sway: for, vast as was his ambition, it conceived of no such trophy as the golden letters that stud the horizon of that sky-suspended vault, consigning the keys of heaven to one who ruled, at least by his successors, the empire of earth.*

But honours of a more substantial nature, and more after the desires of their own hearts, have been awarded to the martyrs: the approving testimony of conscience, and the profound esteem of all good men: their blood has been considered the seed of the Church; and the value of truth has been often estimated by the sufferings of those who have defended it. Yet all this honour, the dome and the column, the applause and the inward peace, is but the faint image of their coming glory: "To each victor is promised," says Tertullian, "now the tree of life and exemption from the second death, now the hidden manna with the white stone, and an unknown name: now the power of the iron rod and the brightness of the morning star: now to be clothed in white, not to be blotted out of the book of life, and to be made a pillar in the temple of God, inscribed with the name of his God and Lord and of the heavenly Jerusalem: and now to sit down with the Lord on his throne, once refused to the sons of Zebedee."†

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* "Thou art Peter; and on this rock will I build my church; and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." The length of the inscription is 440 feet; its elevation above the ground 200: the height of the letters is six feet.

† Scorpiace, cap. 12.

Some confusion has arisen from the ancient practice of applying the term martyrs to those, who, though imprisoned or even tortured, were not called upon to give up their lives for the faith. To these properly belongs the appellation of *confessors.* The sufferers of Lyons and Vienne refused to be called martyrs during their lifetime, "even though they had been tortured not once, nor twice, but often; and had been taken from the wild beasts, and committed again to prison; although they had the marks of fire and the scars of stripes and wounds all over their bodies." The epistle from which this account is taken, adds, that they restricted the appellation to "Christ the faithful and true witness" (or martyr), and to such as had sealed their testimony with their blood. "We," said they, "are mean and humble confessors." The modesty of the Gallic martyrs in the second century is the more to be commended, as an opposite feeling was afterwards visible in some of those who were imprisoned for their religion: perhaps we may attribute this weakness to the honours paid to them.*

It is a question not easy of solution, what first induced the Romans to persecute so violently the Christian sect. The conflagration of Rome, falsely attributed to their agency, was first made the pretext for punishing them: but the accusation was not generally believed at the time, and the extreme severity of their tortures produced a strong feeling in their favour. When we review the small portion of the history of the Church contained in the New Testament, from the time when Pilate washed his hands of our Saviour's blood, to the rescue of St. Paul from the Jews by the chief captain Lysias, we find in almost every instance in which the Christians came in contact with the Romans, that the latter appeared as their just, though often lukewarm, protectors. The Roman deputy Gallio seems to have been actuated by secret favour towards the Christians; for when St. Paul was brought before him by the Jews, Gallio refused to listen to their accusations, and cleared the court of the tumultuous informers. In revenge for the interference of the Hebrews, the Greeks, many of whom had been converted by the Apostle's preaching, took Sosthenes, the newly-elected ruler of the synagogue, and beat him publicly before the tribunal; meeting with no opposition from Gallio, who, not content with protecting a Christian, connived at the ill-usage of a Jew.*

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* Such confessors as had shed blood in their tortures were called *floridi* and *rubri* (florid, and red, confessors).

When Festus left Paul bound, it was to do the Jews a pleasure: when Paul appealed to Cæsar, it was to escape *their* malignity. It was a Roman who thought it unreasonable to send a Christian prisoner without a crime imputed to him: a Roman, who, appreciating the eloquence and truth of the Apostle, trembled at his preaching. It may, therefore, excite our surprise to find this equitable policy exchanged for the spirit of extermination which afterwards appeared among the Heathen: nor can we accuse the genius of Christianity of any change for the worse, which could render it an object of reasonable aversion to its enemies. A probable cause of this hatred is found by Milman in the behaviour of the Christians during the burning of Rome, as their expectation of Christ's coming might lead them to rejoice in the flaming scenes which appeared to be its precursors. But, allowing all possible weight to this supposition, it does not explain the subsequent ill-treatment of the Church, after the repeated injunctions to the contrary contained in the Imperial rescripts.

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* The motives of Gallio are not quite obvious: perhaps the punishment inflicted on Sosthenes was usual in the case of an accusation judged to be frivolous and vexatious: or the Jews may have been unpopular at Corinth.

What seems to have excited the anger of the Roman authorities was the proselytising disposition of the new sect, and their aggressions upon the Pagan religion. The principles of toleration which induced the Romans to allow the free use of hereditary rites and creeds to the nations which they conquered, afforded no protection to persons who had apostatised from the polytheism in which they were born. To quit this with disgust, and to turn round upon its supporters with indignation, was to commit an offence very different from that of the Jew, who, continuing in quiet adherence to the religion of his fathers, in no way disturbed the tranquillity of the state. The aggressive character of Christianity was soon found to be incompatible with the safety of the Empire, which was intimately connected with a firm belief in the invincible character of Rome itself, and a stedfast faith, worthy of a better object, in the omnipotent protection of Jupiter. With the Christian, Rome was neither Ouranopolis nor *Θεα Ρωμη*; even "Eternal City" was a "name of blasphemy;"* and faster than the heathen could raise monuments to the "semper invicti," did the church multiply copies of the Apocalypse. By the introduction of a new creed the very foundations of the Empire were threatened; "and the nations were angry."

A distinction must be made between the penalties legally inflicted on the Christians, and the irregular outbreaks of popular violence by which they suffered; as well as between the general tenor of the laws, and the particular edicts authorising persecutions. It would appear that Pliny, when promoted to the governorship of Bithynia, could find no laws or precedents concerning the treatment of the Christians†; so that up to the year 106, no edicts against them were in force: from which we may infer that the laws of Nero and Domitian had been repealed, a good office which history ascribes to the humane Nerva. The edicts generally required a fair and open accusation of the supposed Christian, which would subject the informer, if unsuccessful, to the penalties provided for such cases. On this point history is clear: and we possess decisive proofs of the just intentions of some emperors. " If the people of your province (writes Adrian to Minucius Fundanus) think that they can accuse the Christians in a court of law, let them do so according to law; but let there be no place for clamours and tumults. It is your part to take cognizance of the affair; and if the Christians appear to have done anything illegal, punish that, and suit the penalty to the offence. And, by Hercules, if any one descends to accusation for mere calumny, let him also feel the full weight of your displeasure."

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* "On the forehead of the purple-bearing harlot is written a name of blasphemy, that is, Rome the Eternal." Hieronymus in Algasiæ Quæst.

† Pliny's Epistles, book x. 97.

Later historians, as might naturally be expected, have in general expatiated upon the times of trouble to the Church, and passed over lightly those of tranquillity. With the name of Diocletian, we associate the recollection of the most fearful scenes, the barbarities of the Thebaid, and the horrors of the Peristephanon; yet for nineteen years of his reign, (from A. D. 284 to 303,) the peace of the Church was unbroken; and so much was discipline relaxed, that Eusebius considered the persecution necessary to restore purity, and a spirit of self-denial. Nor did all the heathen emperors manifest a positive aversion to Christianity: the Pagan historian, Lampridius, has recorded a remarkable example of moderation in Alexander Severus:

" When the Christians had taken possession of a certain place which had till then been open to the public, and the Popinarii (tavern keepers) laid claim to it, the Emperor decreed that it was better that God should be worshipped there in any manner, than that it should be given up to such occupants.* Another instance may be given : Aurelian, when consulted by the Oriental bishops concerning the ejection of Paul of Samosata, referred the cause to the Italian clergy, and finally enforced the execution of their sentence against the dissolute prelate of Antioch.†

The actual extent and severity of the Pagan persecutions, a point much debated among writers, is best ascertained by examining the testimony of authors not professing to treat specially of martyrs, such as Pagan historians, the fathers, and, after the time of Constantine, ecclesiastical historians. It is worthy of remark, that in all the inspired records of martyrdom the mode of execution is described as that usually employed at the time : the scourge and cross were a common punishment with the Romans : and the stoning of Stephen was an act of supposed obedience to the law of Moses. In this circumstance, as we shall presently see, they contrast strongly with some of the later histories, which represent magistrates, otherwise humane, as inventing every refinement of cruelty expressly for the torture of the Christians.

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* In Vitâ Alexandri Severi, cap. 49.

† Eusebii Hist. Eccles. vii. 29. This interference of the Pagan authority, which gave great satisfaction to the Church, afforded no just ground of complaint to the friends of Paul, since the emperor only adjudged the possession of the episcopal residence to the rightful bishop. This event happened about 270.

Pagan writers, while they generally pass by the Christians with contempt, have not omitted to notice the dreadful calamities inflicted by Nero. According to Tacitus, a vast multitude were sacrificed in that first persecution; and both Juvenal and Martial refer to the particular mode of destroying them adopted by the sanguinary Emperor. Succeeding writers allude to the persecutions that followed; and their observations, collected and compared, furnished materials for a controversy on the number of martyrs, warmly agitated in the last two centuries. Up to that time all parties had agreed in receiving the Roman martyrologies as genuine: the first who ventured to oppose the established opinion being the learned Henry Dodwell, author of a treatise entitled, "On the Paucity of Martyrs." He argues that Origen acknowledged very few martyrs before his own time; that is, the middle of the third century, and long before the Diocletian persecution: that few of the emperors persecuted the Church: that their rescripts prevented as much as possible, both the popular tumults and the injustice of the provincial governors: that some emperors were friends and protectors of the Christians, and that others, though not friendly, were far from being violently opposed to them. He does not omit to notice the saying of Ambrose, "I know that many of the Gentiles are accustomed to boast, that they have brought back the axe bloodless from their provincial administration." "It is also," continues Dodwell, "scarcely credible that princes and their officers, who, though persecutors, were in other respects good men, should have been so inhuman, so athirst for the blood of the innocent, as some fable-mongers have represented."*

The "Cyprianic Dissertations" of Dodwell produced for a time a considerable effect on the learned world; but the voice of history, which abundantly attests the sufferings of the ancient Church, was not to be silenced by an ingenious essayist. It was, therefore, quite unnecessary for the translator of Mosheim to inform us, that in the second century, "a horrid custom prevailed, of persecuting the Christians, and even of putting them to death." †

The treatment of the martyrs appears to have depended in great measure upon the individual character of their judge. In the case of Cyprian, suitable respect was paid to his rank, and a direct act of disobedience proved, before the capital sentence was reluctantly pronounced. In the matter of those accused under Trajan, the imperial edict contained the inconsistency of directing Pliny to put to death the Christians brought to him, but in no case to seek for them; whereas in the massacres under Diocletian, no attempt was made to justify their punishment by convicting them of crime.

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* De Paucitate Martyrum.

† Maclaine's Mosheim, cent. ii. chap. 2.

The injustice and cruelty of some persecutors, as well as the character of the proceedings instituted by them, are vividly described in the Apology of Tertullian. But after making allowance for the declamatory style of that author, it is obvious, that notwithstanding the unfair methods of conviction resorted to by the Pagans, there existed among them some sense of justice towards the Christians, to which the appeal of the African Father was directed. The followers of Jesus, he complains, were not placed upon the same footing as other criminals with regard to the means of defending themselves. They were not permitted to answer for themselves, a privilege allowed to every other class of offenders. Nor was their crime properly investigated, but their religion alone, when confessed, was reckoned sufficient ground of condemnation. "In other cases," he complains in a long and eloquent harangue, from which the following sentences are taken, "you expect full evidence and proof of the details, you must be put in possession of the time and place, the accomplices and manner of the deed. With us no such forms are observed: whereas you should examine your prisoner as to the number of infants of which he has partaken*, the Œdipodean banquets in which he has joined: what cooks, what dogs were present. In the case of a murderer, you torture him to make him confess; we, on the other hand, are tortured to force us to deny our crime, that is, our name. A man says, 'I am a Christian;' still he is tortured; you wish him to tell you a lie: I confess and am tortured; what would you do if I denied? You suppose a Christian to be a man guilty of every crime: the enemy of gods, emperors, laws, morals, and of all nature; yet in order to pardon him you force him to deny, for you cannot forgive him without his denying. This is trifling with the laws. Is it then a mere contention about a name? It would seem so, for you forgive us when we deny it." (cap. 2.)

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* Tertullian here alludes to the usual charges brought against the Christians.

The apologist, having thus exposed the injustice of the Pagans, proceeds to draw, from their customary way of speaking, an argument in favour of the moral character of the Christians. "'A good man that Caius Seius,' says one, 'except that he is a Christian'—and '*I* wonder so wise a man as Lucius has suddenly joined them,' says another: but no one reflects that Caius is so good, and Lucius so wise because Christians, or Christians because so good and wise. Another is thus spoken of: 'That woman, once so wanton, so agreeable (quam lasciva, quam festiva),' or 'that youth, so seductive, so gallant—but now they have become Christians:' identifying the name with reformation. But reformation of character under that name offends you.

"Consult your chronicles: you will find that Nero was the first to turn against us the imperial sword. Of such an accuser we boast, for whoever knows Nero, knows that a thing must be very good to have been condemned by him. Domitian too, a limb of him for cruelty. Such have ever been our accusers: but these you yourself condemn, and are accustomed to right those whom they have wronged. But no Adrian or Vespasian, no Pius or Verus, has issued edicts against us. (Cap. 5.)

"You think us traitors for refusing to sacrifice to the emperors, yet in devotion to them we far exceed you. For them we supplicate the true, the living, the eternal God, in whose power they are; to whom they are second, after whom first. With hands extended because harmless, with heads uncovered because not ashamed, without a prompter because from the heart we ask long life and every other blessing for him: these things I can ask only where I know they may be obtained. We do not offer, like you, a pennyworth of incense, the tears of the Arabian tree, two drops of wine, or the blood of some superannuated bullock awaiting its death*, and, to crown all other shortcomings, a conscience so defiled, that when I think what blundering priests are called upon to approve the sacrifice, I wonder they do not think it more necessary to inspect the hearts of the offerers than of the victims. Then, while we stand praying before God, let the ungulæ tear us, the crosses bear our weight; let the flames envelope us, the sword divide our throats, the beasts spring upon us; the very posture of a praying Christian is a preparation for every punishment.* Do this, excellent judges, torture the person that prays to God for the emperor; this will be a crime, when truth and piety are illegal. (Cap. 30.)

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* This statement sadly dispels the charm of the heathen ceremonial. The libations and sacrifices of the ancients might be supposed, from the account of classic authors, to have been costly, if not magnificent. The victims, by law, should have been unblemished, and never yoked to the plough: but the "ancient piety" had considerably declined in the second century. So Juvenal:

> Et ruit ante aram Summi Jovis, ut vetulus bos
> Qui domini cultris tenue et miserabile collum
> Præbet, ab ingrato jam fastiditus aratro.
>
> Sat. x. 268.

"You take it for granted that the Christians are the cause of all the evils that befal the nation. If the Tiber overflows, or the Nile does not; if there be drought or earthquakes, famine or pestilence, then—'The Christians to the lion.' But I pray you, were misfortunes unknown in the world before Tiberius? The true God was not worshipped in Rome when Hannibal measured by the bushel the rings taken at Cannæ, or when the Senonian Gauls filled the Capitol itself. (Cap. 40.)

"What testimony do you not bear us in this, that you rather condemn a Christian woman *ad lenonem* than *ad leonem*; you suppose that we fear sin more than death. Crucify, torture, condemn us: when you mow us down, we increase as in harvest; the blood of Christians is their seed."†

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* The apologist refers to the custom of praying standing, with hands outstretched in the form of a cross. Criminals were bound in the same position before undergoing punishment.

† Apologeticus c. 50. The preceding sentences are not quoted continuously, the entire passages being long.

In such indignant and scornful terms does the champion of Christianity defend his cause, not fearing to attack the religion of the state. Yet we find him escaping with impunity, as well as most of his contemporaries: indeed it has been often remarked, that many of the provincial bishops, exposed as their situation was, held office during the reign of several successive emperors. The deacon Pontius declares that Cyprian was the first Carthaginian bishop who had obtained the crown of martyrdom. In his epistle to the governor Scapula, Tertullian quotes instances in which the Pagans had protected the Christians: he specifies Cincius, Severus, Candidus, and Asper, who had favoured their escape; Pudens, who had refused to try one of them without an accuser; and Severus, father of Antonine, who "understanding that certain illustrious men and women were of that sect, not only dismissed them unhurt, but bore honourable testimony to them, and restored them safely to their friends in the face of a raging populace."

The writings of Tertullian were composed about the year 200, when the space of time over which the Pagan persecutions extended was only half elapsed: it is possible that at that period the Roman government, less corrupt and enfeebled than afterwards, maintained the principles of justice against the mob, with more firmness than towards the time of the Diocletian persecution: certainly, that last desperate attempt to eradicate Christianity was the most vigorous, perhaps in exact proportion to the alarm of the Heathen regarding its final triumph.

It is not difficult for us to enter into the feelings of the Pagans, so far as to imagine the apprehensions with which they must have looked forward to the ultimate issue of the conflict. At the close of the second century, the members of the new sect were not more formidable from their numbers and station, than from their irresistible valour. Carrying in their hand the life they valued so cheaply, the martyrs lavishly exchanged it for the treasures of eternal glory; but besides this, in itself an abundant recompence, they bought over the hearts of men. With such a price, they seduced the world into imitation of their virtues: the same violence that took heaven by force, prevailed over earth and vanquished hell. Nothing could have been devised better adapted to display the power of the new faith, than submitting its professors to martyrdom: not proof against the generous enthusiasm of his victim, the executioner often caught the flame; gazed upon the dangerous spectacle of the power of true religion, till his heart burnt within him; and, fairly overwhelmed by the triumph of faith and hope, hastened to undergo the death which his hands had inflicted on another. It was perhaps the frequent experience of this which led many of the Pagan officers to avoid capital punishment, and to employ the more efficacious method of bribes and entreaties.

There was, moreover, a spirit of combination among the Christians, an earnest energy, and a desire to extend their Master's kingdom at any risk to themselves, that must have suggested gloomy forebodings to the more thoughtful worshippers of Jupiter. There was undoubtedly a falling-off in the devotion of the Pagans, independent of the injuries inflicted on their religion by Christianity; a deistical philosophy was gradually taking the place of polytheism; yet the vigour of the persecutions shows that the "new dogma" was by no means looked upon with indifference, nor did the world tamely allow itself to be surprised into Christianity. Because a rationalist emperor placed together in his palace the statues of Orpheus, Abraham, Christ, and Apollonius, and because a few of the more learned heathen delighted in the same eclectic worship; we are not to infer with Gibbon, that indifference gave the death-blow to Paganism, and that Christianity only stepped in to enjoy the triumph. For one martyr to the unity of God among the Pagans,—for one Socrates, how many might be numbered among the followers of Jesus: to those who bled in the cause, let us ascribe the honours of the victory. So also Tertullian, "Theirs is the victory, whose was the fight: theirs the fight, whose was the bloodshed."*

It is told of one of the Antonines by Eunapius, that he was in the habit of declaring publicly, that before long all the temples would be converted into sepulchres.* From the well-known connection between cemeteries and places of worship among the Christians, it is clear that the imperial statesman foresaw the future ascendency of our religion.

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* Scorpiace, cap. 12.

The number of lapsed persons existing in the Church during the later persecutions, while it marks a declension from primitive constancy, shows also the severity of the trial to which they had been subjected. In these times we can scarcely realise the miserable condition of those, who having apostatised under persecution, were waiting to be restored to the Church. Such persons were forced to do penance under the open sky for years, or even for life: with some sects, as the Novatians, no sufferings could expiate the insult, and no sacrifice remained in heaven to wash away the boundless guilt. The Church indeed, with a better sense of the Divine mercy, argued the point with the inflexible sectaries. "What shall we do, Novatian," asks Arnobius, "shall we condemn the apostle Peter, or shall we receive him on his return to Christ? See, Christ has received him, and do you reject him? Paul also exclaims against you, 'It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?'"† But though not presuming to close the door against return, the Church regarded the apostate as a moral suicide, a wretched shadow of himself, who survived his own decease, and existed but to perform the funeral solemnities for his defunct soul.

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* In vita Ædesii.

† Arnobius in Psalm cxxxviii.

"If you had lost a friend," asks Cyprian of such a one, "a friend who was dear to you, you would lament the sad misfortune; you have now lost your soul, and are to all spiritual purpose dead. * * * You went to the altar, yourself the victim,—yourself the sacrifice: there did you offer up your salvation, your hope, your faith; consuming them in those fatal fires."* So hard was the lot of the repentant lapsed, that even in a temporal point of view it would have been better for them to have ended their lives by glorious death, than to endure the years of shame and misery which awaited them: how great then must have been the horrors which could outweigh both that disgrace and the prospect of eternal ruin!

From the works of Church historians we are able to form but a faint idea of the actual character of a general persecution. We may ascertain how many persons in a city were tortured or put to death; and how the bishop or most distinguished martyr acquitted himself before the judge: but historians do not stay to inform us how the mass of the Church behaved during the weeks or months of danger. We still desire the sort of minute information to be derived from the letters of persons living at the time: the secret history of a persecution, embracing matters deemed unworthy the notice of the systematic historian. And in some instances, time has preserved records, which, though not professedly descriptive of persecution, nevertheless present us with a faithful picture of the events connected with it; which take us behind the scenes, and exhibit to our peaceful times, not the heroism of spiritual demigods, but the trembling faith of weak mortals like ourselves, now fainting, now triumphing, and still oftener evading the trial from which flesh and blood have always shrunk.

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* De Lapsis, cap. 5.

The correspondence of Cyprian, including the letters addressed to him by the Roman clergy, contains materials for a minute history of the Decian persecution at Carthage. In this collection of authentic documents, there is seen a mixture of weakness with the courage of the martyrs, that may indeed sometimes diminish the lustre of their exploits, while the nature of their sufferings, better brought home to our feelings, excites increased sympathy. In almost the only piece of martyr-autobiography contained in it, we read—"I confessed the name of God with fear among the more timid;"* and throughout, there is an entire absence of the usual incidents generally foisted into their narratives by the later Martyrologists.

Early in the year 250 the Decian persecution broke out in Rome; and on the news arriving at Carthage, the people rose in a body, and demanded by name Cyprian archbishop of that city, to be thrown to the lions. On the repetition of the cry, Cyprian, with the concurrence of his clergy, retired to a place of safety, whence he continued by letter to superintend the affairs of his church, having lodged the emoluments of his office in the hands of Rogatian for the relief of the poor during his absence. His first care was to regulate the public services, so as to expose the believers as little as possible to popular rage. He advised that the clergy who administered the communion to confessors in prison* should be constantly changed, and that no crowd should attend on the occasion, for fear of attracting notice. In this particular, he acted for others on the same principles of prudence and moderation which has dictated his own flight.

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* Lucian's answer to Celerinus. Cyprian, Epist. xxii.

Wherever Cyprian may have taken refuge, the quick correspondence maintained between him and his clergy during the summer, shows that he was not very far distant. The propriety of his flight has been debated: that it was the means of preserving to the Church of Africa a primate whose counsel and example proved of inestimable value, appears to justify the step on the score of usefulness; and the readiness with which he presented himself for Martyrdom, as soon as he considered that his work was accomplished, fully clears him from the imputation of any unworthy motive in concealing himself. His flight has proved of service not only to the African Church of the third century, but to Christians of all countries and times, who have gathered instruction from the correspondence thereby occasioned. And unless the final persecution under a future Antichrist should differ altogether from all previous troubles, there can be little doubt but that the letters of Cyprian will rank first among uninspired writings as a guide to the practical difficulties which must arise on such an occasion.

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* The practice of administering the communion to confessors almost every day of their imprisonment, was intended to strengthen their faith and courage against the time of their final suffering, which was unknown to them until they were called out to execution.

When the news of Cyprian's retirement reached Rome, that is, soon after the martyrdom of the bishop Fabian, the Roman clergy took upon themselves, during the vacancy of their see, to write an anonymous letter of advice to the clergy of Carthage, whom they affected to consider deserted, and much needing their brotherly counsel. In this letter they made some very plain allusions to the flight of "the blessed Pope Cyprian," such as a reference to Peter following our Lord afar off; introducing the passage, "He that is an hireling and not the shepherd, seeth the wolf coming, and fleeth." The Roman clergy, as it happened, were in no better circumstances than their Southern brethren, for finding that their episcopal chair was but a stepping stone to the scaffold, they prudently deferred the election of a successor to Fabian. In their letter they inclosed another, to be forwarded to Cyprian, but of this no copy is extant. We can however guess its contents by the dissatisfaction which it gave to Cyprian, who finding it to be without signatures and address, and not even written on the usual description of paper, returned it to them, in order that if they wished to own it, they might subscribe their names. Of this answer they took no notice, though they continued on friendly terms with their correspondent.

The proconsul's arrival at Carthage in the month of April altered the character of the persecution. The inferior local magistrates had no power to inflict any punishment beyond imprisonment: torture and death were decreed by the proconsul alone. The first company of confessors called before the tribunal acquitted themselves gloriously: some, covered with wounds, were remanded till the following day; others, exhausted by loss of blood, breathed their last, and obtained at once the crown. "To-morrow," exclaimed Mappalicus from the rack, "to-morrow you shall see a struggle." He was as good as his word, for the next day he resisted to death, before many witnesses. Fortunata and twelve others were starved to death, and some were long confined in close dungeons. Paulus lived through the torture, but died immediately after.

But the proconsul's arrival did not bring triumph to all. Some who had confessed boldly before the ordinary officers, were not able to make good their profession under torture. They had, as it would appear, calculated upon a speedy release from suffering, and indulged a spirit of boasting, which, as Cyprian remarks, drew down upon them the just judgment of God. Their tormentors took care to prolong their pangs without endangering life: so that a few, overcome by the continued anguish, denied their faith. For such persons Cyprian composed an eloquent apology[*]; and some of them soon retrieved their loss. Æmilius and Castus returned to the conflict, and, though fallen, rose again: they confessed anew, and were burned to death. Surely there is some special strength vouchsafed to those who enter upon the martyr-conflict: tens of thousands have lapsed at the sight of the tribunal: one or two have begged a respite from torture, and gained strength to confess afresh; but of those who have been suffered to fall away after entering upon the trial, the number is small indeed.

After a few weeks the proconsul quitted Carthage, leaving in prison a number of confessors, several of whom died there, and were admitted to the honours of martyrdom. Many also remained in banishment, and of these some returned before their time, for which they were reproved by Cyprian, as they were now liable to be brought before the courts, not as Christians, but as criminals. Others gave occasion for scandal, in a manner deeply lamented by their bishop, and cast upon the manners of the primitive Church a reproach not yet forgotten by the infidel. All this time the number of the lapsed had been increasing, and now amounted to thousands. This immense body fixed upon the remaining confessors as their intercessors with the

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[*] De Lapsis, c. 9.

Church; and if the office was undertaken with less humility than was becoming, the case, it must be allowed, was one of difficulty. It seemed not unsuitable, that they who had fought successfully, far from priding themselves upon their advantage, should be foremost in promoting the restoration of their weaker brethren. The Church scarcely knew how to refuse the petition of her much-honoured martyrs; and God himself, it was argued—God who hears the prayer of faith, will not turn a deaf ear to that of his faithful witnesses. On the other hand, it was felt to be in the last degree dangerous to speak peace where God had not spoken it; and to admit to the cup of the Lord him who had just before drunk that of demons. What security, it was urged, have we for the constancy of our members, if their denial of faith is to be lightly passed over? who will find it worth his while to resist the torture, if his backsliding brother is to be presently restored, and put upon the same footing as he who has endured? Nor let it be said, that peace with God and peace with the Church were matters altogether distinct, and improperly connected in the discussions of that time. It was the business of the Church to comprise among her restored members those, and those only, whom God reckoned among the true penitents; and an error on either side of this narrow line was duly feared. By too great severity the lapsed might be hardened in his denial, or driven to despair: while between his crime and his restoration stood as a flaming sword the awful declaration, "He that denieth me before men shall be denied also before my Father which is in heaven." It was therefore judged advisable to sentence the apostate to a course of penance, unless in danger of death, when a *clinical* or death-bed reconciliation was permitted.

But the lapsed, impatient of their disgrace, bethought themselves of a shorter road to restoration. They beset the prisons, and begged tickets recommending their admission to the sacrament in the name of the confessors. To such an extent was this spiritual mendicity carried, that Cyprian complains that thousands of tickets were daily distributed; but in this estimate some allowance must be made for manner of speaking.

And now began a struggle between clerical authority and the new power suddenly brought into existence. Some of the confessors abstained altogether from using the irregular privilege conferred by popular acclamation, while others abused it to a dangerous extent. Saturninus, after his torture, declined giving any commendatory letters, while Mappalicus interceded for his mother and sister alone. Aurelius, who could not write, employed Lucian to issue tickets in his name; and Paulus, not content with making Lucian his secretary, added a commission to distribute letters "in the name of the martyr Paulus" after his death. This power suited well the wishes of Lucian, who was not backward in dispensing his favours. Celerinus, a Roman confessor, soon wrote to him for tickets in behalf of Numeria and Candida, women who had acknowledged the heathen divinities in order to escape torture. The guilt of Candida was somewhat extenuated, as she had, by bribing the officer, bought off the necessity for sacrificing; so that on arriving at Tria Fata in the Forum, she was allowed to return without going up to the Capitol. Lucian, who was now in the eighth day of slow starvation, with the prospect of living but a few days longer, took upon himself, in the name of Paulus and seventeen other martyrs, to salute Numeria aud Candida, thereby declaring them restored to the Church.

Both Lucian and Celerinus ultimately escaped with life, and Lucian, after some further irregularities, returned to his place in the Church as a humble lay-member. Their letters attracted notice, and copies were sent to Cyprian, who forwarded them to Rome. Thus by accident have come down to us the letters of two illiterate Christians of the third century, one a Roman, the other a Carthaginian. If for no other reason, these letters would be an object of curiosity: but passing between confessor and confessor, the one covered with wounds, the other dying of hunger, they possess a high degree of interest.

We have been too much in the habit of idealizing the heroes of the Church: every martyr is not a Polycarp or a Perpetua: still less a Cyprian, who sacrificing all thought of personal honour to the more comprehensive duties of a commander, awaits the moment of secure victory to rush into the thickest fight and win his own crown. Besides these generals of the martyr-army, there are the many in the ranks, with little knowledge but strong faith—men of a rough sort of Christianity, with religion enough to support them on the rack, but neither able to do themselves credit in writing about it, nor to maintain an even frame of mind when their triumph becomes the subject of general congratulation. Of such persons let us learn what we can.

To understand the little weaknesses of Lucian and Celerinus we should remember that they were persons of scanty education, and scarcely known in the Church till their fortitude was brought to light by persecution. Fully sensible of the importance which they have suddenly acquired, they address each other with ceremony, using the title *Dominus*, which Augustus had not long before declined as too lofty for an Emperor. Each endeavours to magnify the honour due to them in common, and at the same time to vindicate his claim to a full share of it; a feeling imperfectly disguised by awkward compliments and mutual professions of excessive regard. In expecting Lucian to write punctually during his sufferings, Celerinus is certainly unreasonable, knowing well the dreadful circumstances in which he was placed. Celerinus writes from a prison in Rome.

"While writing these things to you, my lord and brother, I am both glad and sorry: glad, because I hear that you have suffered for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, and have confessed his name before the magistrates of this world; and sorry because I have received no letter from you by a recent opportunity. And this often happens to the servants of God, especially to those who are engaged in confessing Christ, for he who expects a heavenly crown, does not always attend to earthly things. I said therefore, that perhaps you had forgotten to write to me. Yet on such an occasion, I may say it of the least of your brethren, if I am worthy of the title, Celerinus would have been heard of. For when I was in the midst of my florid confession, I remembered my old friends. * * *

"I believe that though we see each other no more in this world, we shall yet meet in another, when crowned in Christ. Pray that I also may be deemed worthy to be crowned among your number. Know that I am now in great tribulation: how much you are present with me, and how by day and by night I recall our former friendship, God only knows. Happy are you, realizing your long-cherished wishes: for when sleeping on the ground, you desired that you might be cast into prison for His name's sake: which thing has now happened to you, as it is written, The Lord grant thee the desire of thy heart. * * *

"Macarius salutes you, together with his sisters Cornelia and Emerita, who rejoice in your florid confession, also all the brethren; Saturninus also, who has himself wrestled with the devil, and has confessed the name of Christ, and has confessed bravely while tortured with the ungulæ, seconds but too earnestly my request" (for Numeria and Candida). "Take notice also, that I have written another letter to my lords your brethren, which I beg you will have the goodness to read for them."

The Carthaginian, still in prison and under great privation, thus answers:

"To the lord Celerinus, Lucian his colleague, if worthy to be called so, in Christ, health.

"I received your letter, my lord and brother most beloved, by which you have so grieved me, that I had almost fallen from that joy which I experienced on receiving a letter from you after so long a silence. I was rejoiced by your manner of making mention of me, arising from your great humility; for you write 'If I am worthy to be called a brother;' of a man who confessed the name of God with fear among the more timid. For you, by God's will, did not only confess boldly, but even intimidate that greater serpent, the pioneer of Antichrist, by that voice and those godly words by which you conquered him: such as, 'lovers of faith'—'zealous of the profession of Christ'—and so forth: in which smart style of speaking I am happy to think that you excel. But my dear friend, already to be reckoned among the martyrs, you have thought fit to grieve me by your letter, in which you speak of our sisters. I wish it were possible, that they could be mentioned without the recollection of so great a crime, in which case we should have fewer tears to shed than at present. * * *

"We were sentenced, in obedience to the Emperor's edict, to be starved to death. We were therefore shut up in two cells, to be consumed by hunger and thirst. There were fire and vapour, and our tribulation was intolerable, such as none could support, but now we have reached brightness itself. † * * *

"By God's will, Fortuna, Victorinus, and their brethren, have died of hunger in the prison: in a few days you will hear that we have joined them. For since we were shut up the second time, it is now, on the day on which I write, eight days: before those eight we had, during five days, a small piece of bread, and water by measure, given to us. We salute Saturus, Bassianus, Colonica, and all the rest, whose names I do not write, as I am now exhausted: they must therefore excuse me. I bid you farewell."‡

From the concluding request of Celerinus, Lucian appears to be the only prisoner at Carthage who could read and write. He soon found further employment for his pen, and acting as secretary to the confessors, wrote to Cyprian, informing him that they had thought fit to grant peace to all whose conduct since their lapse had been inoffensive: they also cautioned Cyprian against refusing their request, on peril of their displeasure.

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† The meaning of Lucian is obscure: he probably means to quote the passage, "We went through fire and water, and thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." Or perhaps the opening of the fifth seal, from the ante-Hieronymian version. See Apoc. vii. 14.

‡ Numbered 21 and 22 in most editions of Cyprian's epistles.

The disapprobation of Cyprian was strongly expressed: "It is not martyrs that make the gospel," he exclaimed, "but the gospel that makes martyrs." * While the confessors took upon themselves to proclaim peace almost indiscriminately, they threw upon Cyprian the odium of refusing it to individuals; and by their loose manner of wording the letters, left a wide opening for the return of doubtful persons. "Let such a one with his friends be admitted to communion," was an unreasonable demand upon the leniency of the Church. The lapsed were reminded by Cyprian, that there was still a direct way to restoration, by confessing Christ before a heathen tribunal. Some adopted this nobler course: a woman named Bona, when dragged to sacrifice a second time, refused; her hands were held by her husband, while she involuntarily performed the act, crying out incessantly, "It is you, not I, that do it." She was banished, together with four others who had also previously lapsed; all these were admitted to communion. The case of the rest was deferred till Cyprian should be able to consult with his colleagues.

The great principle which guided the archbishop in this matter was the importance of not suffering the lapsed to appear to "serve two masters." Those

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* The confessors, by declaring peace to those whose apostacy was so recent, were in effect making a new gospel.

who sacrificed at the beginning of a persecution, obtained a certificate, which commonly freed them from further molestation. Others bought the certificate without sacrificing: these were termed *libellatics*, a less flagrant class of lapsed. If, under such circumstances, persons are received back by the Church during persecution, there is obviously no need for confessing at all: the Church contradicts the Gospel, the first demand of which is successfully evaded. Mappalicus and Paulus may die in their beds, but the world will remain heathen.

The lapsed, still clamorous for admission, continued to trouble Cyprian; but he received unexpected support from some of the confessors, who saw with regret the irregular proceedings of their brethren. Moyses, Maximus, Nicostratus, and Rufinus addressed a letter to their bishop, thanking him for his exhortations, and attributing to him part of their success in the conflict. At the same time they begged him, by all that was noble in the confession of Christ, and fearful in the state of those who should deny Him, not to break down the hedge between the faithful and the apostate, or to allow room for the supposition that the difference between them was a slight one. But the lapsed, now grown outrageous, began to prescribe terms as if with the authority of the Church. Cyprian, surprised, inquired how they came to constitute the Church, seeing that God had declared himself to be "not the God of the dead, but of the living." Besides refusing their request, he confirmed the excommunication of Gaius, presbyter of Didda, who had persisted in communicating with them.

On the decline of persecution, some of the surviving sufferers received ordination. Aurelius, a youth, was made reader, though he deserved higher honours, having been banished, and afterwards tortured. Celerinus, who had passed nineteen days with his feet most painfully distended, was also made a reader. Numidicus, an older believer, was made presbyter, in consideration of his peculiar sufferings. He had exhorted many to endure martyrdom, and had sustained their courage at the last: he had seen his wife burnt to death by his side, and was himself half roasted by the flames, covered with stones, and left for dead. His daughter, who sought his body with the intention of burying it, found life not quite extinct, and succeeded in restoring animation. In the prospect of such a presbyter, Cyprian exulted, and looked forward to the time when Numidicus should be made a bishop. It was but natural, he thought, that all these should be promoted from the rack to the desk; that, having confessed Christ in torture, they should now declare His words in the Church. It is pleasing to find that they were especially noted for their modesty and humility; qualities which forbid the supposition that any but the purest motives sustained them in their sufferings. *

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* Cypriani Epistolæ, et de Lapsis. These letters bring before us the principles and conduct of one of the most perfect characters of history. It may be doubted, whether any uninspired person

We have now examined a few of the authentic records of antiquity, best calculated to give us indirect information concerning martyrdom: but besides these, there is a large class of writings professedly devoted to the subject. Of the rise and progress of martyrology, as the medium through which the primitive martyrs generally appear to us, it is important that we should have some knowledge.

There has ever existed throughout the Church an earnest desire to learn in what frame of mind her faithful members encountered martyrdom; how they felt and acted in that solemn hour, from the mere contemplation of which our nature shrinks. We long to know, all at least who desire to share the spirit of the martyrs, how faith fared when so hardly beset by sense, and what measure of infirmity adhered to the soul already standing at the gate of heaven. The inspired writings, though containing a slight record of the earliest martyrdoms, can scarcely be said to have satisfied this wish, but rather to have supplied a test by which to judge of the authenticity of other narratives. With the professed intention of reporting the last words and actions of an innumerable host of the faithful, have been composed the detached treatises entitled "Acts

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has ever better realized the conception of apostolic unity, or more largely sacrificed personal feeling to maintain it: "I beseech you, brethren," seems to be his motto, "that ye all speak the same thing, and there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. i. 10.)

of the Martyrs," as well as the voluminous works known by the name of Martyrologies. To collect and illustrate the biographies of saints has been with some writers the business of an entire life; yet amidst this profusion of materials there is little of a nature to satisfy the cautious inquirer: in this interminable banquet we cry famine. In times of persecution few sat down to write histories of passing events, and the fury of Diocletian exterminated many records of earlier times. The scanty remains still extant have been in some instances corrupted by transcribers; and to complete the confusion, the world has been so inundated with apocryphal stories, containing prodigies and horrors the most astounding, that the constancy of real sufferers is cast into the shade, eclipsed by the grandiloquence and stoicism of fabulous heroes.

To separate from this mass of rubbish a few facts relative to the Roman martyrs, is the present design of the writer. Among the most inviting anecdotes of the first century, is that of "Domine quo vadis?"

During the Neronian persecution, (we are told by Ambrose*,) St. Peter, in compliance with the wishes of his friends, resolved to flee from Rome, and had already reached the gate of the city, when our Saviour met him. The apostle quickly recognized his Divine Master, and inquired with some surprise, "Lord, whither goest thou?" "I go to Rome to be crucified again," the Saviour answered, and disappeared. St. Peter, left to himself, was not long in interpreting these words as referring to Christ's suffering in his servants: for, as he reasoned, "in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." With these reflections he retraced his steps, and explained to his friends the cause of his return. The following morning he suffered death by crucifixion.

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* Oratio ad Auxentium.

There is strong reason for believing that this story can be traced back not only to the crucifixion of Peter, but to the conversion of Paul: that for *Domine quo vadis?* should be read *Domine quis es?* and for the gate of Rome, the way to Damascus.

The earliest version of this story now extant occurs in the works of Origen, who quotes, though with some hesitation, a still older, but apocryphal work, "The Acts of Paul;" in which was an account of the Lord's appearing to St. Paul, and saying, "I must be crucified again."* In this story we recognize the vision seen by persecuting Saul, so told as not to lose the point of the Saviour's answer, that He suffered in His afflicted servants. For this doubtless was understood to be the meaning of the declaration, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."

The acts of Processus and Martinianus, a document to which nobody has been rash enough to assign a date†, improve upon the incident by joining St. Peter with St. Paul, and shifting the scene to Rome. Ambrose, as we have seen, omits St. Paul, and makes his fellow-apostle sole hero of the narrative.

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* Origen in Johannem, tom. xxi.

† Published by Surius, in his Vitæ Sanctorum.

This story is repeated without material alteration by the Pseudo-Hegisippus in the fifth century, Luitprandus in the tenth, Rupert in the twelfth, and Innocent III. in the thirteenth. The precise spot on which the event happened was not fixed till the fifteenth, when some person selected a part of the Appian way, about a mile from the gate of Rome, and built close beside it a chapel, named "Domine quo vadis?"

In the sixteenth we find a regular service appointed for this chapel, which Onuphrius Panvinus reckons among the most hallowed localities of Rome. *

The chapel soon fell into decay, and was rebuilt by Cardinal Pole, some time before the year 1584, in which Panvinus wrote. The very appropriate

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* De præcipuis Urbis Romæ. This little work, a devotional guide-book to the churches of Rome, has always been highly esteemed for learning and accuracy. In the service for that chapel occur these sentences:

Antiphon. Thou art the shepherd of the sheep, the first of the apostles: to thee are given the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Versicle. Thou art Peter.

Response. And on this rock will I build my Church.

Prayer. O God, who to thy blessed apostle Peter hast given the Pontificate of binding and loosing souls, by conferring the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: grant that by the help of his intercession, we may be freed from the bands of our sins, through Christ our Lord.

name before given to it was soon changed for that of S. Maria in palmis, or more correctly, according to some, S. Maria ad passus. The meaning of this change will soon appear.

So striking an incident as that recorded in the legend would have been sufficient to secure the reputation of any chapel, but for the want of some visible proof of its truth. To obtain this, at so great a distance of time, was not easy; nor was it much less difficult to imagine the sort of proof that could be taken as evidence of the momentary appearance of a glorified body. But the proprietors of the little chapel overcame all difficulties: they added to the legend an incident omitted by the writers of fifteen centuries, that our Lord had left the print of his footsteps in the Appian way: and to silence all objections, they produced the identical stone which had retained the impression. This was the work of the seventeenth century, for Aringhi is the first writer who describes "that stone most worthy, more valuable than any precious jewel."*

Vainly does the traveller hope to test the authenticity of this relic by a previous examination of the hexagonal Appian pavement, or the dark grey porphyry which composes it. In the floor of the chapel is inserted a square mass of whitish semivitreous rock, displaying two irregular depressions, which bear too faint a resemblance to the human footstep to provoke a conjecture whether they were executed by the chisel, or cast in some soft material. If the block be compared with the Appian pavement, the very stones cry out against the resemblance; but criticism is wasted; a cautious inscription informs us that the original relic is now preserved elsewhere; the stone before us professes to be a copy.*

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* Roma Subterranea, lib. iii. c. 22.; Rupertus Tuitensis, De Gloria Trinitatis, lib. viii. c. 5.; Luitprandus de Rebus gestis in Europâ, lib. iv. c. 3.; Innocentius III., Sermo II. in festo SS. Petri et Pauli; Hegisippus de Excidio Judaico.

By the adoption of this and other legends equally fabulous, the Church of Rome has done itself injustice, casting discredit upon the truly authentic remains in which the city abounds. Although the frequent detection of fraud has too often given rise to the impression that a story is probably false if adopted by the Church of Rome, we must not suffer ourselves to overlook the illustrious trophies which she undoubtedly possesses. For *there* was maintained the fiercest of the fight; and there fell two, dignified with the most honourable of titles, "Apostle and martyr": in one day suffered Peter and Paul, whom the rage of Nero joined in martyrdom, though the rights of Roman citizenship separated them in the hour of death, and the Tiber now divides their sepulchres. The citizen of Tarsus was beheaded: the Galilean Jew underwent the servile punishment of crucifixion.

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* The pretended original has *never* been exhibited in the chapel of Domine quo vadis; for Aringhi, writing in 1651, tells us that it had been shown in the old chapel, but had been replaced by a copy in the new: unfortunately for this story, Panvinus, who wrote after the rebuilding, and was not likely to omit the smallest relic, mentions neither stone nor copy.

To return to the history of martyrdom. Among the earliest sufferers in Rome after the completion of the inspired canon, was Ignatius, who was devoured by beasts in the Coliseum, A. D. 107. Of his martyrdom we have a short narrative, expressed in language sufficiently inelegant and obscure to stamp it as the work of uneducated persons; and professing to be the production of the martyr's personal friends. In addition to these "acts," published by Usher and Ruinart, we have the epistles of Ignatius written to seven Churches while on his way to Rome; in this respect he imitated his apostolic friend, who had departed this life a few years earlier. These epistles have happily come down to us uncorrupted.

From these "acts" and epistles we learn all that is known of the last days of Ignatius. While the Emperor Trajan was passing through Antioch on his way to Armenia, he observed that a portion of his subjects rendered him imperfect homage, so that the lustre of his recent victories seemed to suffer some diminution. His indignation being roused, he issued an edict commanding the Christians to sacrifice to the gods, under pain of instant death. Ignatius, fearing for the Church over which he was bishop, presented himself before Trajan, and after a short conversation, too well known to need repetition, was sentenced to death. He was placed under the care of soldiers, to be conducted to Rome; during the journey he contrived to visit Polycarp, his fellow-disciple in the school of St. John. He also wrote to the church of Rome, requesting them to make no attempt to save his life. Among the latest recorded sayings of this Christian hero, "now ready to be offered" and near the time of his departure, are these words :—

> "I fear your love for me, lest it should do me an injury : *your* object is easy of attainment, but for me it is hard to attain to God, if under the pretext of carnal friendship you spare me.
>
> "Pray to the Lord for me, that through these instruments I may become a sacrifice to God. I tell you these things, not with the authority of Peter and Paul, for they were apostles of Jesus Christ; I am but a little one. They were free, though God's servants: I am still a servant; but if I suffer, I shall be made Christ's freedman, and shall arise free in Him. Now bound in Him, I learn to desire nothing vain or worldly. From Syria to Rome, by land and by sea, I fight with beasts, bound day and night to ten leopards*, my military guards—who in return for kindness display more harshness.
>
> "Now I begin to be a disciple, desiring nothing seen or unseen, that I may attain to Jesus Christ. Let fire and cross, beasts and wounds, rending of joint from limbs, dissolution of the whole body, yea, let the malice of the devil come upon me, only let me win Christ. The ends of the earth can now do nothing for me, neither the kingdoms of this world. It is better for me to die for Jesus Christ, than to rule to the limits of the globe."

The voyage of Ignatius and his friends was protracted by a storm which overtook them near the port of Ostia; the martyr afterwards wished to land at

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* This passage throws light upon an expression used by St. Paul, "After the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus:" *κατα ανθρωπον εθηριομαχησα.* 1 Cor. xv. 32.

Puteoli, that he might go over the ground formerly traversed by St. Paul, but was prevented by the soldiers, who for this strict performance of their duty have been sometimes unnecessarily blamed. There was indeed no time to be lost, for the passage had been so much delayed by the wind, that the soldiers began to fear being too late for the sports in which their prisoner was to sustain so terrible a part. But the martyr's impatience at least equalled theirs; and they reached Rome on the 13th day before the Kalends of January, during the celebration of a great fair (the Sigillarian festival), which had brought together an unusual concourse of people. Ignatius, now so near to the fulfilment of his wishes, was led to the Coliseum, already crowded with spectators. Before an eager multitude, drawn together to see an old man wearied and defenceless, unresistingly torn to pieces by beasts, the martyr received his crown: a few fragments of bone strewed the soil of the Flavian amphitheatre, all that remained on earth of one who had received an inheritance in heaven. Ignatius, knowing the danger often incurred in obtaining the remains of the martyrs, had expressed a wish to be so entirely devoured by beasts, that no fragment of his body should be found: he could not have expressed more strongly his confidence in the resurrection, or more energetically have subscribed to the declaration, "if our earthly tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God." So insupportable has the idea of this apparent annihilation seemed to some later martyrologists, that they have had recourse to a fiction to avoid it, asserting with little faith and less veracity, that Ignatius was strangled by two lions who left the body untouched. *

The catacombs do not afford that full information on the subject of the Roman martyrs, that might be expected; the epitaphs of five martyrs only having been discovered in them. Of these, one suffered under Adrian, one under Antonine, one or two under Diocletian, and one under Julian. This computation excludes votive tablets: such as

VLVASIO MARTYRI

"To the martyr Ulvasius" (Aringhi); to which no value can be attached, as they may have been raised in commemoration of distant or even imaginary martyrs. The few here cited as genuine possess the strongest marks of authenticity: the first, belonging to about the year 130, is given by all the Roman antiquarians:

TEMPORE ADRIANI IMPERATORIS MA-
RIVS ADOLESCENS DVX MILITVM QVI
SATIS VIXIT DVM VITAM PRO CHO
CVM SANGUINE CONSUNSIT IN PACE
TANDEM QVIEVIT BENEMERENTES
CVM LACRIMIS ET METV POSVERVNT
I. D. VI.

In Christ. In the time of the Emperor Adrian, Marius, a young military officer, who had lived long enough, when with blood he gave up his life for Christ. At length he rested in

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* Even Ruinart complains of their emendation: "the Latins, especially the more modern, tell the story rather differently, &c." —Note to Acts of Ignatius.

peace. The well-deserving set up this with tears and in fear. On the 6th before the Ides of ——.

This monument was probably erected some years later than the death of Marius, though in a time of actual persecution: the meaning of the word *benemerentes*, unless added by a later hand, is not obvious.

Next in chronological order comes the epitaph of Alexander, given in the second chapter of this work; it belongs to about the year 160, in the Antonine persecution.

About the beginning of the third century arose a discussion between the Pagans and Christians, which throws some light upon the state of martyrology at that time. Celsus, on the part of the heathen, reproached his opponents with the fortitude of Anaxarchus, who, when pounded in a mortar, exclaimed, "Pound the shell of Anaxarchus, himself you touch not." "What," he asks, "did your Deity say in his sufferings, comparable to this?"* Had the martyrologies of later times been then in existence, Origen might have matched the speeches of Epictetus and Anaxarchus by such sayings as that attributed to St. Laurence, "It is cooked: turn and eat." The answer of Origen must therefore decide the question whether or not similar stories were in his time current. It decides in the negative, for he returns answer that a pious submission to God's will, or even a prayer, such as "if it be possible let this cup pass from me," is more truly magnanimous than the affectation of insensibility, so lauded in the Pagan sufferers. From this we may conclude that the Divine example was still followed as the model of a Christian's behaviour in the dreadful scene, and that the abusive and vainglorious retorts of later writers were not yet invented.

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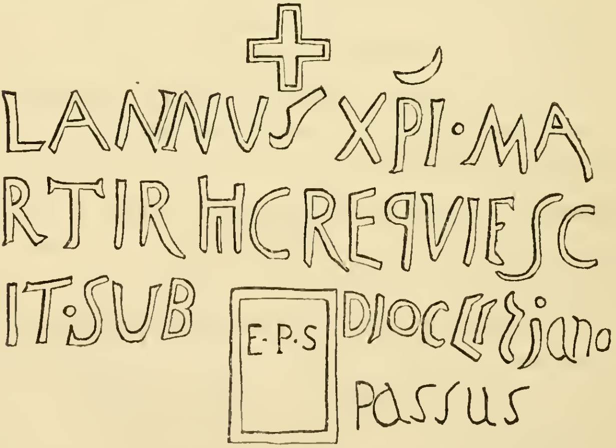
* Origen in Celsum, lib. 7.

Another subject discussed between Origen and Celsus was the authenticity of the Sibylline oracles: a question too nearly connected with that of the genuineness of some "acts" to be passed by in this place. From having quoted these fictitious works in proof of their religion, the Christians early obtained the name of *Sibyllists.* "You have daringly," said Celsus, "inserted many abusive passages among her verses." Origen complains that Celsus did not specify the interpolations, nor produce old copies of the original writings. It is certain that Celsus might have supported his charge. The name of Orpheus had also been borrowed: his writings, evidently fictitious, were circulated in the Church. The first converts long retained a prepossession in favour of Orpheus, whom they considered a type of our Lord, by the sweetness of His preaching, drawing all men after Him.

The existence of the Pseudo-Sibylline oracles shows but too plainly that there were in the ancient Church persons capable of forging documents of a Christian character, and others credulous enough to be deceived by them. Besides such treatises as the Clementine recognitions, the Apocalypse of St. Peter, and the Gospel of Nicodemus, it is certain that apocryphal acts of Martyrs were propagated from time to time, fragments of which, carelessly transferred to their own pages by writers of approved veracity, have introduced confusion and contradiction into some of the best works on Ecclesiastical History.

Of the ninth and last persecution under Diocletian, the most severe that the ancient church experienced, the catacombs contain but one known monument, the epitaph of Lannus. This martyr is not mentioned in history, and but for the rude inscription which has been preserved in the catacombs, his name would have been forgotten on earth, until, in the language of an African Martyr, it had been heard at the day of judgment. The inscription was discovered and published by Boldetti.



Lannus, Christ's Martyr, rests here. He suffered under Diocletian. (The sepulchre is) also for his successors.

This fac-simile represents one of the very few epitaphs actually inscribed on the grave of a martyr, specifying him to be such. Its value is increased by the letters E. P. S., showing that the tomb had been legally appropriated to Lannus and his family after him—et posteris suis.

Aringhi contributes another, which probably belongs to the same date.

PRIMITIVS IN PACE QVI POST
☧ MVLTAS ANGVSTIAS FORTISSIMVS MARTYR
ET VIXIT ANNOS P.M.XXXVIII CONIVG.SVO
PERDVLCISSIMO BENEMERENTI FECIT

It was not usual in the ancient church to record in an epitaph the circumstance of martyrdom: all the exceptions known are in the case of men. It was the martyr's widow who broke the customary silence, and in her bereavement sought consolation in perpetuating the triumph which had cost her so dear. "Primitius in peace, after many torments a most valiant martyr. He lived 38 years, more or less. His wife raised this to her dearest husband, the well deserving."

Although the church took but little care to record her sufferings under Diocletian, we have a proof of their sweeping severity in the inscriptions raised by that Emperor and his colleague. According to Gruter, they were found on two columns in Spain.

DIOCLETIAN . CAES .
AVG . GALERIO . IN . ORI
ENTE . ADOPT . SVPERS
TITIONE . CHRIST .

VBIQ . DELETA . ET . CVL
TV . DEOR . PROPAGATO

DIOCLETIANVS IOVIVS ET
MAXIMIAN : HERCVLEVS
CÆS : AVGG .
AMPLIFICATO PER ORIENTEM ET OCCIDENTEM
IMP : ROM :
ET
NOMINE : CHRISTIANORVM
DELETO QVI
REMP : EVER
TEBANT.

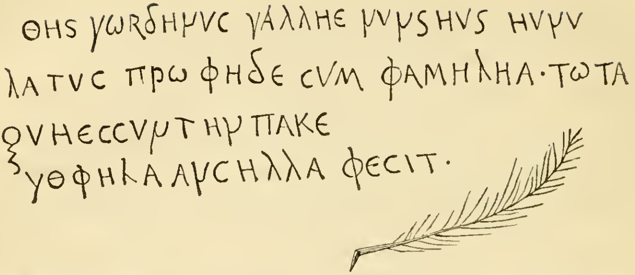
The first of these celebrates the universal extinction of the Christian superstition in the East, and the propagation of polytheism under Diocletian and Galerius. The second extols Diocletian and Maximian for having extended the Roman empire, and extinguished the name of the Christians, who were overturning the republic.

We have here a monument raised by Paganism over the grave of its vanquished foe. But in this "the people imagined a vain thing:" so far from being deceased, Christianity was on the eve of final and permanent triumph, and the stone guarded a sepulchre empty as the urn which Electra washed with her tears. Neither in Spain nor elsewhere can be pointed out the burial-place of Christianity: "it is not; for the living hath no tomb."

The final establishment of our religion was effected almost without a struggle: the edicts of Constantine were received with acquiescence, and the nation appears to have been more than half

Christianised before Paganism was rejected by the state. A powerful reaction followed the last persecution, greatly increased by the divine judgments inflicted on some of its principal abettors: these were so remarkable as to give occasion to a special work of Lactantius, entitled, "The Deaths of the Persecutors." The return of the exiled confessors was triumphant, and the Pagans themselves acknowledged the interference of God in behalf of his worshippers.

The short persecution which occurred during the reign of Julian gave rise to few martyrdoms, it being the policy of that emperor to discountenance, rather than to crush by force, the hostile faith. The taste for martyrological fiction already beginning to find its way into the church, deeply affects the value of most pretended records of that persecution, but among these, the legend of Gordianus has recently been verified by evidence of so remarkable a character, as to encourage a hope that other documents, at present unauthenticated, may yet receive confirmation from equally remote sources. His epitaph was discovered by Aringhi in the cemetery of St. Agnes, and published, together with an interpretation, in 1650. So strangely was the inscription expressed, that the persons who, some centuries before, had transported the body of Gordianus to Gaul, had left the epitaph, not knowing to whom it belonged. It is written in a barbarous Greek character, of which no other specimen has been discovered in the catacombs:


θHS γωRδHμVC γAλλHE μVμSHVS HVγV
λATVC πρω φHδE CVM φAMHλHA·TωTA
ϙVHECCVμT HΥ ΠAKE
ϒΘφHλA AΥCHλλA φECIT·

Read—Hic Gordianus Galliæ nuncius, jugulatus pro fide. Cum familiâ totâ; quiescunt in pace; Theophila ancilla fecit.

Here lies Gordianus, deputy of Gaul, who was executed for the faith. With all his family: they rest in peace. Theophila, a handmaid, set up this.

We are not to infer from these words that the whole family was martyred, or that they all rest in the same grave; but simply that Gordianus was martyred, and that the rest had died before Theophila set up the monument. But why Gordianus, sent to Gaul as legate, should bring back a maidservant who wrote Latin words in Greek characters, and why these characters should be unlike all others found in the Roman cemeteries, requires explanation.

About thirty years after the time of Aringhi, Mabillon drew attention to an observation made by Julius Cæsar, that the Gallic Druids were accustomed to use Greek letters in their secular transactions, and that they had the management of the education of youth.* This accounts for Theophila's Greek, some letters of which can scarcely be admitted within the pale of the standard alphabet. She afterwards learns Latin, but only by ear: this ill-assorted learning does not enable her both to write and speak any one language. Were it sufficient for her to *dictate* the epitaph, this would create no difficulty; but the stone-cutter to whom she entrusts its execution, is probably ignorant of letters, and must have an exact copy of the inscription laid before him. Theophila has one resource, to express Latin words in Druidical Greek letters: in this way she contrives to record the martyrdom of her Master.

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* De Bello Gallico, lib. vi.

We are here met by a difficulty: we have made out, upon the strength of an obscure inscription, the story of a Roman legate, a man high in office, martyred for the faith. We have placed the incident in Rome, and fixed upon the catacombs as his burial place: we have given him a household, and, in particular, a faithful Christian handmaid, who raises a monument to his memory. But does history contain no notice of so remarkable an occurrence? Aringhi, who discovered the epitaph, knew of none: and so strongly did he feel the want of some historical confirmation of his interpretation, that he endeavoured to explain the words "Galliæ Nuncius," as "ecclesiastical *nuncio* from Gaul."

About ninety years before Aringhi wrote, Surius published a manuscript, entitled "The Martyrdom of St. Gordianus." In this tract is described the conversion of a Roman nobleman named Gordianus, through the preaching of Januarius the presbyter who suffered in the time of Julian: also the baptism of Gordianus and his wife Marina, together with a large part of his household, amounting to fifty-three persons. Gordianus was martyred, and his body exposed before the temple of Minerva, from which indignity it was soon rescued by one of the household, who buried it in the catacombs on the Latin way.

A coincidence more complete can scarcely be desired: the passage in Cæsar's Commentaries not brought to bear upon the subject till 1680; the epitaph itself first discovered and interpreted in 1650; and the martyrology of Surius, published in 1560, and not quoted in illustration of the epitaph by either Mabillon or Aringhi, compose a strong body of evidence: and when we consider that this evidence is now brought together in its entire form, perhaps for the first time, the impossibility of any collusion between the witnesses will be obvious.

We have now passed through the reign of Julian: from this time downward we must be content to find the authentic records of martyrdom but sparingly scattered throughout voluminous collections of "Acts," and often to receive in their stead a series of novels extravagant in style, and in many cases discreditable to their authors. If chronological order be strictly adhered to, the list of those who have dabbled in martyrological fiction must begin with the great name of Ambrose.

To the practice of building chapels over the graves of martyrs, had succeeded that of transporting their remains: for martyr-graves could not always be found in situations suitable for building, and relics were, in course of time, thought almost necessary to the consecration of a church. For some time the catacombs of Rome furnished bodies for this purpose; but at Milan, the congregation of Ambrose found trophies nearer home. This transaction, which leaves but a narrow loophole for the escape of the bishop's personal character, is best told in his own words:

> "To a sister more dear than life or eyesight, her brother Ambrose. As I omit to tell you nothing that is done here in your absence, know also that we have found holy martyrs. For when I was about to consecrate the Basilica, many of the people exclaimed, as with one voice, 'Will you thus consecrate the Basilica Romana?' 'I will do it,' said I, "if I can find martyrs:" and immediately there came over me, as it were the glow of a lucky omen. To shorten the story: the Lord vouchsafed his favour, for while the clergy were in alarm, I gave orders that the ground should be dug up in front of the chancel of Sts. Felix and Nabor. I found encouraging signs; for after I had sent for some of those on whom we were soon to lay hands, the holy martyrs so began to betray themselves, that an urn was seized and overturned before the sepulchre, while we stood still beside it. We found two men of wonderful size, such as the ancient age produced—the bones all entire—abundance of blood."*

"I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf," once said Aaron, in circumstances not altogether dissimilar. The fresh corpses received the names of Gervasius and Protasius, and were in due time enrolled as saints and martyrs. In the Roman Ritual of Paul the Fifth, as well as in numerous breviaries and pontificals, occurs the petition, "Holy Gervasius and Protasius, pray for us."†

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* Ambrosii lib. x. Ep. 85.

† The Roman Missal, A. D. 1657, has a service for their festival. The post communion is in these words:—

During the life of Ambrose, though, perhaps, not under his superintendence, other discoveries were made, which throw some light upon the invention of the last-mentioned saints. In the life of Ambrose, written by Paulinus, is described the discovery of Nazarius martyr: the simplicity of the narrator disarms criticism.

> "At that time," says the worthy bishop of Nola, "was brought to the basilica of the Apostles, that is, the Basilica Romana, the body of St. Nazarius the martyr, which had been buried in a garden outside the town. In the sepulchre which had contained the body of the martyr (who, when he suffered, we have not to this day been able to discover), we saw the martyr's blood as fresh as if it had been shed that very day. So entire and undecayed was the head, together with the hair and beard, that it seemed to us as if washed and laid in the sepulchre, at the time that it was taken up. And what marvel? since the Lord aforetime promised in the gospel that not a hair of their heads should perish." *

After a few years, the discovery of imaginary martyrs became a source of profit to unprincipled persons, who, in defiance of the Theodosian law, hawked their worthless wares about the distant villages. "Let no one," enjoined the edict of 386, "let no one carry away or sell a martyr." † The Church was soon forced to interfere, and at a council held in Carthage, A. D. 401, it was ordered

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"May this communion, O Lord, cleanse us from sin, and, through the intercession of thy holy martyrs Gervasius and Protasius, make us to be partakers of the heavenly remedy, through the Lord."

* Paulinus in Vitâ Ambrosii.

† Codex Theodos. lib. ix. titulus 17.

that all false martyr churches and unauthenticated relics should be destroyed: that none should be enrolled as martyrs without sufficient proof: and that all altars consecrated upon the authority of dreams, and on other superstitious grounds, should be disavowed.

This decree was more easily passed than carried into execution: it was not always possible to decide upon the authenticity of a shrine, and popular acclamation often settled the question in the way most favourable to the taste of the age. The demonological skill of Martin of Tours was now brought to bear upon the subject: a certain martyr-altar, though duly consecrated by bishops, and honoured by the people, had long excited his suspicions; for, in answer to repeated inquiries, no satisfactory account of the martyr could be obtained. At length Martin, resolving to seek information from the best authority, proceeded with his friends to the tomb, and invoked the spirit of its occupant. The event justified his caution: a dirty and savage-looking ghost, altogether unlike that of a martyr, appeared on the left hand of the shrine, and candidly confessed that he was but a common thief, executed for his crimes, and honoured through a vulgar error. He had, he said, no connection with the martyrs. The friends of Martin, though not sufficiently clear-sighted to see the ghost, received from him an accurate description of its appearance, and concurred in the propriety of removing the altar.* By such exploits, the saint earned the title of "Beatus Martinus."

Martyrology, when viewed as a branch of literature, is found to pass through the same stages as the fine arts in general. The acts of Ignatius may be taken as a specimen of the early or *pure* style: with the works of Ambrose we enter upon the *florid:* a sure sign that the *debased* is not many centuries distant.

Among the most elaborately finished productions of Ambrose, is the story of Theodora, a young woman of remarkable beauty, who had attracted the notice of the governor of Antioch. Vainly was she urged to renounce Christianity; threats of torture failed to shake her constancy; and when finally told that she must either sacrifice, or be publicly disgraced, she calmly answered, "The will alone is what God regards." Being at length condemned by the reluctant governor, she was led to the place of confinement, where she offered up a prayer for deliverance. A ferocious-looking soldier forcing his way through the crowd, immediately entered the cell: "Shut your ears," exclaims Ambrose at this juncture, "Christ's faithful witness suffers; nay, but listen once more, for deliverance is at hand." That wolf's clothing disguises a sheep; the man of arms is a soldier of the cross, bent on saving his fellow believer at the cost of his own life. He quiets her apprehensions, and proposes to exchange dresses with her, so that she may pass out in his stead. "Take the dress which hides your sex, and give me that which makes me a martyr; believe that for Christ's sake you wear this heathen habit. Be this," he continues, putting upon her his armour, "be this your breastplate of righteousness, this your shield of faith, and this your helmet of salvation. But, above all, as you go out, hide your face, and let no thought of my fate cause you to turn your head; if tempted to look back, remember Lot's wife." Theodora escaped in safety, leaving the generous Didymus within. The next who entered, discovered the change of the prisoner; but, unable to explain the mystery, attributed it to a miracle. The circumstance was soon reported to the governor, and Didymus sentenced to execution.

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* Sulpitii Severi, vita Martini, cap. viii.

But Theodora, hearing of his apprehension, ran to the place of punishment, and hastened to dispute with him the crown of martyrdom. "I will not be guilty of your death," she exclaimed; "I consented that you should preserve my honour, but not my life. If you deprive me of the crown of martyrdom, you will have deceived me." Two contended, both triumphed: the crown was not divided, but conferred on each.*

Whether in the Diocletian persecution married women suddenly failed in that constancy which they had exhibited in the times of Perpetua and Felicitas, or whether later martyrologists thought their sufferings not sufficiently interesting to deserve commemoration, the reader must decide: from whatever cause, the virgin martyrs begin after this time to engross exclusive attention. Between the desire to magnify the indignities offered to them, and at the same time to exhibit them as coming off with undiminished honour, writers are sorely perplexed. The usual custom is to introduce a miracle by which they are rescued from impending fate, which on some very rare occasions is admitted to have befallen them. This remark, however, applies more particularly to the writers of the middle ages.

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* Ambrosius de Virginibus, lib. ii.

The fame of the Catacombs as a repository of martyrs' ashes now spread throughout Christendom, and attracted to Rome many admirers of relics. Among these was Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, a native of Saragossa, who, about 380, travelled from Spain to Rome for the express purpose of visiting the Catacombs; and whose enthusiasm, kindled by the countless sepulchres of the martyr Church, found expression in a collection of Hymns, entitled Peristephanon, or "Concerning the Crowns:" his merits as a poet will come before us afterwards, at present we have to consider him as the first writer who attempted to reduce to a pleasing form the incidents of martyrdom. The habit of supplying from imagination, deficiencies in the interest or continuity of a story, though excusable in a poet, has had the worst effect upon this branch of history: for prose authors, following Prudentius literally, have copied the exaggerated expressions which disfigure his verses. An illustration of this occurs in the history of Laurence: Ambrose, who first describes his martyrdom, tells us that while burnt on a gridiron over a slow fire, he exclaimed "It is cooked, turn and eat." [*] In the hands of Prudentius, these words expand into a speech of several lines:

> Converte partem corporis
> Satis crematum jugiter:
> Et fac periclum, quid tuus
> Vulcanus ardens egerit.
> Præfectus inverti jubet.
> Tunc ille: Coctum est, devora,
> Et experimentum cape,
> Sit crudum an assum suavius.
> Hæc ludibundus dixerat.[†]

This amplification, however questionable in point of taste, may be allowed in a florid poem, and should be received as a mere flourish of the writer. But Foxe has understood it differently, having mistaken the versification of the poet for that of the martyr: for he represents Laurence, while lying on the gridiron, as addressing the judge in a stanza of four lines, of which he gives a metrical translation. This mistake is the sole foundation of the popular story of St. Laurence's verses on the gridiron.[‡]

The last and longest of the hymns in the Peristephanon, describes the martyrdom of Romanus, who suffered under Diocletian, in the year 303.

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[*] Ambrosii Officiorum, lib. i. c. 41.

[†] Prudentii Peristephanon, Hymn III. 401.

[‡] See Foxe's Acts and Monuments, vol. i.

After the execution of the sentence —

> Tundatur, inquit, tergum, crebris ictibus
> Plumboque cervix verberata extuberet;

the martyr, nothing overwhelmed by the hailstorm of the leaden scourges (pulsatus illâ grandine), but retaining both sense and speech, addresses Asclepiades in an oration, in which he enumerates the crimes attributed to the heathen deities. The judge, roused at length by the oft-repeated question, "Would you have me worship such a god?" attempts a reply: he argues that Rome had obtained her present glory under the patronage of Jupiter Stator; and that it would be ungrateful to leave the worship of the eternal gods who presided over the building of the city, for a novelty just called into existence; and after a thousand consulates had rolled away, to embrace this new Christian dogma. The flesh is now cut from the bones of Romanus, while he carries on a comparison between the pains he endures, and those attendant upon sickness. "The ungulæ tearing the sides," he observes, "give no pang so sharp as those of pleurisy: the red-hot plates are less scorching than the heat of fever; nor are my swelled and tortured limbs more painful than those of persons suffering from gout." His constancy is next put to the proof by fearful mutilations, after which he delivers an harangue on the cross and the plan of redemption; then adducing the command not to cast pearls before swine, he professes his intention of remaining silent for the future. He adds, however, that if the judge will fix upon any child of seven years old or under, he will pledge himself to follow whatever that infant may declare to be the truth. Acting upon this suggestion, the president seizes an infant in the crowd, and, after obtaining from it a confession of Christianity, orders it to be scourged.

In this scene, the severity of the punishment, its effect upon the bystanders, the weeping executioners, but, most of all, the inhuman conduct of the mother of the child, in reproving it for begging of her a cup of water, and referring it to a long list of Jewish martyrs by way of consolation, have afforded Prudentius abundant scope for the horrible descriptions in which he delights:—

> "Vix hæc profatus, pusionem præcipit
> Sublime tollant, et manu pulsent nates;
> Mox et remotâ veste virgis verberent,
> Tenerumque ductis ictibus tergum secent,
> Plus unde lactis, quàm cruoris defluat.
> Impacta quotiens corpus attigerat salix,
> Tenui rubebant sanguine uda vimina,
> Quem plaga flerat roscidis livoribus.
>
> * * * *
>
> At sola mater hisce lamentis caret,
> Soli sereno frons renidet gaudio."

The child, though exhausted by loss of blood, revives and smiles; and during its decapitation, the mother sings the versicle, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."* The torturing of Romanus now proceeds with redoubled vigour, and after several miracles, only serving to provoke Asclepiades and to prolong the sufferings of the martyr, he is despatched by strangling.

The writers who flourished soon after the time of Julian vied with one another in elaborating highly-coloured descriptions of the horrors of martyrdom. Prudentius being the first who wrote in metre, we cannot always say in poetry, brought out the whole subject with fresh embellishments, and was greatly admired by his contemporaries and successors. "The torments which Prudentius admirably describes," remarks Ruinart, in reference to the sufferings of Romanus. But the hymn just quoted is sufficient to shake our belief in him as a martyrologist: without reckoning the miracles, the whole story is a string of improbabilities: the martyr is represented as betraying an infant to certain destruction: the mother displays a want of feeling scarcely credible, and altogether odious: and the infant itself, though lately weaned, exhibits the understanding and resolution of mature age. The profusion of miracles answers no end, and is supported by no evidence: indeed, the existence of miraculous adjuncts to martyrdom must often be doubtful, from the difficulty of obtaining dispassionate testimony. There are, moreover, strong objections in the nature of these miracles: that God should deliver His servants from their enemies, or support them miraculously under torments, is perfectly in accordance with the tenor of the inspired records: but, if we are to believe Prudentius, Romanus having had his face completely cut to pieces, and being still enabled to speak distinctly, derives no relief from the supernatural aid: he is delivered to another executioner, who cuts out his tongue. After the second mutilation, the martyr, having no voice to send heavenward, no words with which to proclaim his Master's triumph, draws from his inmost heart a long sigh, and supplicating with a groan, breaks forth: "Who speaks of Christ never yet wanted a tongue: and ask not by what organ words are formed, when the Giver of words is the subject of speech." Yet no conversion of the bystanders ensues; nor does any effect follow the miracles, excepting that of exasperating the judge. The same want of result is observable in most of the prodigies related by Prudentius.

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* The poet has found a worthy commentator in Fabricius, who has this note: "The mother is tempted by the complaining of her child, but persists in her exalted resolution. * * * She refuses a little water to his thirst, and directs him to Christ as a fountain." Foxe takes the same view of her conduct.

Perhaps we shall not be wrong in ascribing the character of these stories to the excited state of feeling which prevailed when they were written. Their general tendency is to make us believe that the martyrs suffered no pain, and had therefore less merit in facing the torments prepared for them: while they exhibit the victim and his executioner as two combatants, "hinc martyr, illinc carnifex."

the one backed by miracles, and supported by insensibility to pain; the other armed with the most fearful implements that human or diabolical cruelty could invent. In this novel species of single combat, in which high words were not wanting on either side, the pagan was invariably worsted. For in his own dissolving powers the martyr saw the pledge of victory; and the failure of pain to shake his constancy was a deep disgrace to his foe. Unfettered by the "nec Deus intersit" of the profane, the poet liberally introduced the agents of heavenly or hellish power: if there was no group of Oceanides to console the Christian Prometheus, there was a chorus of angels to sing in his dungeon, to strike off the galling fetters, and to fill the air with odours. The spiritual support promised to martyrs is realised in the most material form: the sharp edges of the flints are sheathed in flowers, and a ray of light, escaping beneath the door, reveals to those without, the presence of celestial visitants. The jailer listens in amazement: at one moment the clear voice of the martyr fills the cavern; at another the invisible Coryphœus invites him to heaven, and promises an eternal crown:— "Arise, illustrious martyr, secure of thy reward: arise, and join our company.—O warrior most invincible, braver than the bravest, thy tortures, cruel as they are, fear thee their conqueror." *

The humble Felicitas, when asked by a soldier

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* Peristephanon, Hymn 2.

how she would endure the pangs of martyrdom, made answer in the memorable words, "Another will suffer in me." The martyrologists seldom imitate this speech, but prefer to represent their heroes as endowed with a species of insensibility. In what might be a Christianised version of the speech of Anaxarchus, Prudentius makes his hero explain the principle of his fortitude: —

"Tear as you will this mangled frame,
Prone to mortality;
But think not, man of blood, to tame
Or take revenge on me.
You overlook, in thus supposing,
The nobler self that dwells within;
Throughout these cruel scenes reposing,
Where nought that injures enters in.
This, which you labour to destroy
With so much madness, so much rage,
Is but a vessel form'd of clay,
Brittle, and hasting to decay.
Let nobler foes your arms employ;
Subdue the indomitable soul;
Which, when fierce whirlwinds rend the sky,
Looks on in calm security,
And only bows to God's control."*

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* "Erras cruente, si meam
Te rere pœnam sumere,
Quùm membra morti obnoxia
Dilancinata interficis.
Est alter, est intrinsecus,
Violare quem nullus potest,
Liber, quietus, integer,
Exsors dolorum tristium.
Hoc, quod laboras perdere
Tantis furoris viribus,

If we cannot allow as a genuine offspring of Christianity the spirit that attributed fierce words and a proud stoicism to the martyrs, neither can we admit to that honour the rage for martyrdom that is said to have possessed some of the younger believers. In the year 372 the Council of Elvira found it necessary to refuse the honours of martyrdom to those who were killed in breaking idols, on the ground that such a proceeding was neither commanded in the Bible, nor sanctioned by Apostolic example. In telling the history of Eulalia, Prudentius highly approves of her bold and insulting bearing towards the Pagan authorities. That young lady had from the cradle given promise of a fierce and unsociable disposition, calculated, if we are to believe the descriptions of the poet, to distinguish her in the religious world then existing. On the outbreak of persecution, she was removed to the country by her heathen parents, and even shut up to prevent any collision with the authorities. On a dark and silent night she escaped from her home, and, guided by angelic torch-bearers, made her way into the city. Early in the morning she presents herself at the tribunal and vehemently abuses the emperor and his gods. She requests that her bodily frame may be torn to pieces, as a thing useless in itself, and

Vas est solutum ac fictile,
Quocumque frangendum modo." &c.

The entire passage is imitated from Cyprian's tract to Demetrian, cap. 8.

unworthy the trouble of preserving. Provoked by her language, the prætor orders the lictors to bind her; but, before inflicting punishment, he sets before her the miseries which she draws upon herself and her parents, the prospects of happiness which her home offers, and the speedy marriage which awaits her. A grain of incense cast upon the coals is to be the sign of her recantation. To this she vouchsafes no verbal answer; but spits in the face of the prætor, throws down the images, and kicks over the thurible. The two executioners immediately perform their office by tearing with the ungula her sides and bosom. In the gashes inflicted by the instrument, her excited imagination traces the letters of her Master's name; and her voice, unshaken by sob or sigh, joyfully proclaims His triumph.* Torches are afterwards placed under her face; and this gives her an opportunity of ending her life by inhaling the flames of her burning hair.

To return to the prose writers. "The acts of

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* "Nec mora, carnifices gemini
Juncea pectora dilacerant;
Et latus ungula virgineum
Pulsat utrimque, et ad ossa secat,
Eulaliâ numerante notas.
Scriberis ecce! mihi Domine;
Quàm juvat hos apices legere."
Peristephanon, Hymn 9.

The various "acts of Eulalia" differ so much from each other, and contain such revolting improbabilities, that the original story appears to have been completely lost.

Tarachus and Probus," says Ruinart, who published them in the seventeenth century, "rank among the most precious and genuine monuments of antiquity." This treatise, professing to relate the martyrdom of three Christians, reported by eyewitnesses, begins by placing the event in the first consulate of Diocletian, that is, in the year 284, in the middle of the fifty years' peace enjoyed by the church. Hence we cannot suppose the acts to be older than the fifth century, as the date of the persecution could not easily have been forgotten earlier. These Acts profess to be a transcript of the proconsular records, procured for the Christians by Sabastus, an archer on duty at the trial: to this is subjoined an account of the death and burial of the sufferers, added by a Christian. In such a document there should be no difficulty in ascertaining where the martyrs suffered; for it has never been doubted that Cyprian was beheaded at Carthage, nor did those, who in the sixteenth century denied that St. Peter was crucified in Rome, suggest any other scene of his martyrdom. But whether Tarachus and his companions witnessed for the faith in Tarsus, Sciscia, Sicily, Cilicia, Mopsueste, or Anaxarbus, remains doubtful amidst the contradictory assertions of two Greek manuscripts.

The most remarkable feature of these acts is their highly unnatural and improbable character. A condensed enumeration of tortures, varied only by the repartees of the sufferer, may for a few lines excite horror; but when continued through many pages, imagination refuses to grant such powers of endurance to our frail nature. A difficulty meets us at the outset: these "Acts," though given as an official report of the trials, betray a Christian author, for they contain abundance of speeches attributed to the martyrs, related in Christian language. Indeed, the chief point of the narrative is made to lie in these speeches, generally highly figurative, and the mistakes of the Pagans arising from a too literal interpretation of them. Happily for the reader, his attention is continually diverted from the mutilation of the martyrs, to their successful wit-combats with their judge. "Rub him with salt," exclaims the governor; "Salt me more, that I may be incorruptible," replies Tarachus. When taunted by Maximus with his blindness, he returns the reproach, and boasts of inward vision. He professes to be armed from head to foot, clothed in divine panoply: Maximus, who sees his naked body one undistinguishable wound, is necessarily puzzled by the assertion, and has recourse to fresh barbarities to maintain his credit. Lastly, Maximus dismisses him, promising to think over some fresh tortures for their next meeting.

In such narratives, the language put into the mouths of martyrs is not always to be justified on Christian principles. Nor should the degree of provocation received by them be admitted as an excuse, for they are represented as perfectly unmoved, capable of arguing with precision, and annoying their tormentors with well-directed sarcasm. Unsuitably enough occurs the following passage in the Acts of Boniface. "The holy martyr said to him, 'Be dumb, wretch; and open not thy mouth against my Lord Jesus Christ. O serpent of darkest mind, ancient of evil days, a curse upon thee." In the second hymn of the Peristephanon, St. Vincent is made to remind Datianus of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha, and to assure him of the certainty of his obtaining the same sulphureous portion in the lowest hell: —

"Vides favillas indices
   Gomorreorum criminum;
   Sodomita nec latet cinis,
   Testis perennis funeris.
Exemplar hoc, Serpens, tuum est,
   Fuligo quem mox sulphuris
   Bitumen et mixtum pice
   Imo implicabunt Tartaro."

In these ill-concocted tales, every principle of probability is violated; between them and the authentic records of martyrdom there exists not the slightest analogy. Are we to suppose that God, who gave the martyrs grace to suffer gloriously in His cause, should have left them to disgrace that cause by a vain bravado, or abusive retorts? And if the appearance of insensibility to pain be considered a test, these stoical confessors must be allowed infinitely to exceed St. Paul in fortitude: compared with his plea of citizenship, adduced to escape torture, their demand for more horrible inflictions must indicate vastly higher attainments in faith and piety. The physical effects of the tortures are never taken into account in the later "Acts:" there is no collapse or prostration of strength, no swooning from profuse bloodshed. Either a miraculous agency, not specified in the Acts, has throughout averted the usual effects of mutilation, or the entire narrative is grossly exaggerated. The only sufferer is the judge: he it is who rolls his eyes in frenzy, and gnashes his teeth with vexation*; while the martyr finds vinegar mild, and salt without pungency; mistakes mustard for honey, and claps his blood-stained hands as the ungula rends his limbs.

In order that the believers of peaceful times should not remain ignorant of what had passed in the days of persecution, it became customary to read in churches, on the saints' days, appropriate portions of the martyrology. This habit prevailed during the seventh century. That stories like those of Tarachus and Eulalia were highly popular, and drew large congregations, there can be little doubt; but in 706, the Quinisextan divines found it necessary to interfere. The martyrologists, emboldened by the expression of public taste, which they themselves had helped to form, had proceeded to horrors and impossibilities, which provoked this judicious censure from the fathers assembled "in Trullo;"—"Whereas certain false stories of martyrdom have been circulated by the enemies of truth, calculated to bring the martyrs into discredit, and to drive the hearers of such things into infidelity: we decree that they be not read in the churches, but be committed to the flames."*

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* "His persecutor saucius
Pallet, rubescit, æstuat,
Insana torquens lumina
Spumasque frendens egerit."
Peristephanon, Hymn 2.

In the middle of the ninth century lived the famous Greek martyrologist, Simeon Metaphrastes, one of the most pleasing writers of fiction that the middle ages have produced. "One thing is to be observed in reading him," remarks Cardinal Bellamine, "that much is added from his own imagination, not as things were, but as they might have been."†

A new incident, dexterously introduced by Metaphrastes, is the judge's hopeless love for his victim. In the history of Marina, a virgin martyr of Antioch in Pisidia, the interest thus created is supported throughout the narrative. Olybrius, president of the city, beholds the maiden, and, struck by her resplendent beauty, seeks her hand in marriage. Unsuccessful in his suit, he orders her to be seized as a Christian, and resolves, as a last resource, to torture her into compliance. Having refused to sacrifice, she is stripped, stretched upon the ground, and whipped with rods: but, through miraculous support, enjoys perfect freedom from suffering. The judge, yet hoping to move her, orders her to be scourged with iron wires; she still shows no sign of pain. But the tender frame of the martyr, though enjoying immunity from suffering, is amenable to the law of mortality. Olybrius beholds with horror her ghastly and quivering limbs; and traces the signs of impending dissolution, where once had shone the beauty that still torments his soul. He buries his face in his mantle, and with difficulty gives the order for suspending the torture. But here Metaphrastes relapses into the incredible: miracles and fresh tortures follow in quick succession; and, as a passing incident, he notices the conversion of 15,000 men and many women, all of whom are martyred.

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* Concilium Quinisextum, sive in Trullo, canon 63.

† Bellarmine, de Script. Ecclesiast.

The Greek historian Nicephorus, a writer of the fourteenth century, gives an entirely new collection of stories relative to the Diocletian persecution. Among the least improbable is the history of Euphrasia, a young woman of remarkable beauty, who received the sentence described as common in the Diocletian persecution. To the first person who gained access to her, she represented herself as an enchantress, skilled in the knowledge of poisons and their antidotes: on condition of receiving no insult, she proposed to render him invulnerable to steel, by a preparation which she had discovered. "But you will of course," she added, "wish to see its efficacy proved, before concluding the agreement." Immediately producing an ointment, she applied it to her neck, directing the youth to draw his sword, and use his utmost endeavours to inflict a wound. Deceived by her manner, he obeyed, and beheld with horror the head of his victim rolling at his feet.

Among the stories circulated in the fourteenth century is that of St. Veronica, whose existence is still pertinaciously maintained by the church of Rome, in opposition to the learned of her own communion. Early in the middle ages prevailed a custom of painting upon pieces of cloth the portrait of our Saviour: the accuracy of the likeness or *icon*, being, it is supposed, attested by inscribing beneath it the words Vera icon, or more probably *icona**, afterwards corrupted into Veronica. This history of the name is gathered from the circumstances under which many writers describe these *veronicæ*: examples have been cited by Mabillon, from Romanus, Petrus Casinensis, and Augustinus Patricius: he also mentions the petition of a Cistercian abbess to the Pope's chaplain (dated 1249), begging a copy of the picture contained in St. Peter's. De Trecis complied with her request, and begged her to receive the copy as "a holy Veronica, Christ's true image or likeness."† Ordinary copies were sold cheap: Ducange's editors quote a document relating the expenditure of 3½

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* *Icona* was a common word for *picture*. So the Chronicon Casinense: "quinque suspendit iconas * * * alteram iconam rotundam." lib. iii. c. 31.

† Iter Italicum, p. 88.

tareni (about half a florin), for " three large and six small Veronicæ." The next stage in the growth of the legend, was the discovery that the original Veronica was an actual impression of our Saviour's features, miraculously taken at some time or other: according to Mabillon, during the Agony in the garden ; to Ducange, on the way to Calvary ; and by another class of persons noticed by Baronius, supposed to have been left upon the head-dress in the sepulchre.*

In the fourteenth century it appeared high time to reduce these floating elements to a more consistent form: Rome therefore availed herself of a tale invented 300 years before by Marianus Scotus, who had attempted by a bold stroke to fix the legend upon antiquity. In 1083 this writer informed the world that Tiberius, when afflicted with leprosy, sent for Christ to heal him: to his disappointment Christ had been some time dead. But the messengers brought back a woman named Veronica, who displayed a portrait, presented to her by Christ as a reward for her attachment: the sight of this cured Tiberius. Marianus pretends to quote from Methodius, in whose works the passage cannot be found.*

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* Ducange, Glossary, sub voce " Veronica ;" Baronii Annales Eccles. Anno 34. This sudarium or head-wrapper is quite distinct from the handkerchief, and is first mentioned by Bede as having been " stolen from the sepulchre by a most Christian Jew." De Locis Sanctis, cap. 5. We hear of it again in 803, when it was presented to Charlemagne, along with a nail of the cross, the chemise of the Virgin Mary, &c. Martinus Polonus, Supputationes. Anno 803.

Putting all this together, the Roman authorities decided that Veronica was the name of a holy woman who followed our Lord to Calvary; and who, while piously wiping the Redeemer's brow with a cloth, received as a reward the miraculous impression of His countenance. Of this woman, whom Baronius calls Berenice, there is a colossal statue in St. Peter's at Rome; and, what is worse, her image occupies a prominent place in the hearts of an ignorant people.†

About the year 1320, John XXII. issued a prayer, "by repeating which devoutly, looking meanwhile upon the face of Christ, an indulgence of 10,000 days may be obtained." In this hymn the latest version of the story was maintained by the Pontifical poet:

> "Salve, sancta facies
> Mei redemptoris,
> In quâ nitet species
> Divini splendoris.

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* Marianus Scotus, Chronicum, anno 39.

† See the inscription set up by Urban VIII., in the seventeenth century:

SALVATORIS IMAGINEM VERONICAE
SVDARIO EXCEPTAM
VT LOCI MAIESTAS DECENTER
CVSTODIRET . VRBANVS . VIII .
PONT . MAX .
MARMOREVM SIGNVM
ET ALTARE ADDIDIT CONDITORIVM
EXTRVXIT ET ORNAVIT

Impressa panniculo
Nivei candoris,
Dataque Veronicæ
Signum ob amoris.
Salve, decus seculi
Speculum sanctorum,
Quod videre cupiunt
Spiritus cœlorum.
Nos ab omni maculâ
Purga vitiorum,
Atque nos consortio
Junge beatorum," &c.*

The handkerchief of St. Veronica is publicly worshipped in Rome on stated occasions, and the ceremony is performed with the utmost splendour: no part of the Romish ritual is more calculated to strike the imagination. The prostrate multitude, the dome of St. Peter's dimly lighted by the torches in the nave, and the shadowy baldacchino, hanging to all appearance in mid air, form a spectacle not easily forgotten.

The revival of learning, while it checked the further fabrication of martyr legends, procured a more extended circulation for those already existing. The press now groaned with Lives of Saints, Acts of Martyrs, Flower of Saints, Golden Legend, and other collections of detached treatises, which had hitherto been unknown beyond their parent monasteries. Had the compilers studied to represent monasticism in its worst light, they could not have done so more effectually: nothing is too puerile, too strongly opposed to the gospel precepts, to find its way into their volumes. Some collections, as that of Bolland, contain stories altogether immoral in their tendency, interspersed with miracles, which, when attributed to the Holy Spirit, come very near to blasphemy.* It is through the medium of such writers that the Church of Rome desires us to behold the primitive martyrs.

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* This prayer is copied from an illuminated MS. in St. George's Library, Windsor. The end of the preface must not be omitted; "At si quis eam (orationem) ignoraverit, dicat v pr. nr. inspiciendo Veronicam." Does this mean that five repetitions of the Lord's Prayer would do as well as one of Pope John's?

This Veronica must not be confounded with the other saint of that name commemorated by Bolland, (tom. i. Jan. 13.) whose eyes were occasionally black from the blows inflicted by demons. She lived in 1497.

We have now reached the *debased* style of martyrology: marked by the trifling productions of ignorant fable-mongers, not thoroughly in earnest, if we may judge from the conceits interwoven with their tales. The Golden Legend suggests that Cecilia was so named, *quia cæcitate carens:* Ribadeneira informs us, that Christina was so baptized on account of her future devotion to Christ, and that Hortulana, a little garden, produced the *illustrious* plant, her daughter Clara. An infant, according to Surius, receives the name of Ursula, in token that she shall one day fight with that great bear, the devil. Nor is this want of seriousness confined to the comments of the narrator: the history of St. Ursula is a collection of ridiculous incidents, given in the usual style of Surius, "from a very old MS., the language of which has been a little polished by Surius for the sake of the reader." No authorities are cited, nor is there any thing to contravene the supposition that the whole story is founded upon a mistaken rendering of the inscription,

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* Acta Sanctorum Bollandi, an unfinished work in fifty-two volumes folio.

VRSVLA · ET · XI · MM · VV

interpreted "Ursula and eleven thousand virgins," instead of "eleven virgin martyrs."* Nothing more childish than this legend ever followed the prefatory announcement, "Religiosissimus monachus dixit."†

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* Bearing upon the origin of this legend, is the story of Cyriacus, told by Martin Polonus. "Cyriacus was not reckoned among the popes, because he quitted the papacy against the wishes of the clergy: *substituting Antheros*, and setting out for Cologne with eleven thousand virgins, whom he had baptized in Rome. For the cardinals thought that he had abandoned the papacy, not from devotion, but on account of the charms of the virgins: they were, nevertheless, all martyred together."—*Supputationes*, anno 238. The insertion of Cyriacus in the papal list appears to be a practical joke. Anteros was a real pope of the third century, as well as the god of mutual affection. In 1117, Rodolph mentions, among the relics in his church, "some of the Virgin Mary's hair, of James the Apostle's clothes, and of the remains of the *eleven* virgins."—*Spicilegium*, vol. vii. 475. The Salisbury Breviary of 1555, gives the prayer for the feast of the eleven thousand virgins: "O God, who, by the glorious passion of the blessed virgins, thy martyrs, hast made this day a holy solemnity to us, hear the prayers of thy family: and grant that we may be freed by the merits and intercession of those whose feast we this day celebrate. Through," &c.

† The usual form of reporting monks' speeches in the second Nicene council.

We now see what the monks had been doing for three hundred years: though quiet, they had been in mischief. With what feelings a "religiosissimus" monk sat down to invent a martyrdom, in his cell, or under his garden hedge, he has left us little room to doubt; for his animated descriptions of "the holy and delicate body of the saint," "the form which Apelles could not justly represent," and "the virgin limbs, whiter than snow or privet blossoms," show that his meditations were by no means strictly confined to Church history. *

Lest the fictions of Roman martyrologists should bring the subject altogether into discredit, let us once more hear an ancient martyr speak for himself. We possess the last prayer of Polycarp, uttered while he stood among the faggots; reported by eye-

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* A specimen of the most exaggerated style occurs in the martyrdom of Christina, told by the Jesuit Ribadeneira, (Flos Sanctorum).

" · · · Exarsit eâ re Virginis pater adeo, ut ipsemet crudelibus eam verberibus exceperit: ad hæc vestibus nudatam jussit eam dire suis a famulis, donec viribus deficerent, vapulari. Sed nec hâc crudelitate contentus, patrem exutus, hostemque et ferociam lictoris indutus, posterâ die ferreis eam jussit ungulis adeo violente lancinari, ut non tantummodo ubertim rivi sanguinis virgineo a corpore manarent, sed tenerrimæ quoque carnis frusta defluerent, nudaque ossa paterent. Martyr autem, hinc admirandâ patientiâ illinc invictâ stupendâque fortitudine armata, sese submisit, suæque carnis frusta humo sustulit, eaque patri carnifici obtulit, hisce verbis: Accipe, crudelis tyranne, sanguinem tuum; vescere carnibus quas genuisti. Pater indignatus filiam mox in ferream jussit agi rotam, nonnihil a terrâ elevatam, sub quâ prunas oleo aspersas curavit apponi. Non tulit hanc crudelitatem Deus, qui machinam contrivit, et mille paganos spectaculo præsentes impiis illis ignibus involutos occidit."

witnesses of his martyrdom, and circulated throughout Asia Minor immediately afterwards. An unusual interest attaches to Polycarp, from the prophetic reference to his death which occurs in the Apocalypse; for he was made bishop of Smyrna by the apostles *, and was therefore personally addressed in the promise, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

> "O Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, God of angels and powers, yea of every creature, and of all the just who live in Thy sight; I give Thee thanks, that Thou hast judged me worthy of this day and hour, worthy of receiving part in the number of martyrs, and of sharing the cup of Christ; unto the resurrection of life eternal, of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Spirit. Among whom, may I be received before Thee this day, as a well-pleasing and acceptable sacrifice, as Thou hast prepared, who hast foreshown and also hast fulfilled, a God of truth who cannot lie. Therefore for all things I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, through the eternal high priest Jesus Christ Thy beloved Son, through whom to Thee with Him, and the Holy Spirit, be glory, now and for ever. Amen."†

This Amen, pronounced with a clear voice, was the signal for lighting the pile: the song of praise was for a few moments interrupted by the flames, to be resumed in that land whose language his ardent faith had anticipated on earth.

Martyrology passed through one more phase before the re-opening of the catacombs. Soon after the revival of learning, arose a school of scientific

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* Irenæus adv. Hæreses, lib. iii. c. 3.

† Eusebii Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 15.

martyrologists, who, had they confined their researches to authentic records, might have arrived at important and valuable results; but assuming as the groundwork of their speculations the truth of the most extravagant acts, they did but encumber the subject with fresh refinements of horror and cruelty. A fair specimen of this class is Gallonius, author of the work entitled, "De Cruciatibus Martyrum."

This writer greatly exaggerates the power of the human frame to support mutilation: he represents one sufferer with a row of large nails driven into his back, another sitting up, alive, with the four limbs amputated and left to bleed. This idea of driving nails into the body, excepting for the purpose of crucifixion, is founded on mistake. Metaphrastes tells us, that a certain virgin martyr was fastened *to* nails: Ribadeneira, in a new version of the narrative, assures us that the nails were driven into her. The tortures represented by Gallonius are sometimes multiplied: a martyr is painfully suspended by the feet; a slow fire is placed under him, to produce suffocation; and he is, meanwhile, beaten on the head with clubs or mallets. The work would be nothing without the plates: as if to state simply that the martyrs were suspended in various painful attitudes would be insufficient, sixteen varieties of hanging have been specified; and, to the dismay of the reader, the whole sixteen appear in engravings. Lest we should think lightly of the pains of being burnt alive, if conveyed by mere verbal description, not less than nineteen modifications of this torture are figured, and explained in the margin.

All that lies between a slight historical mention of the details of martyrdom, and the drawings of these martyrologists, is mere invention. We are told by ancient writers, that the *plumbatæ* were scourges loaded with lead; beyond that, we know nothing of them: also, that the scorpion was a knotted stick, as opposed to the *virgæ læves:* when, therefore, we are shown an engraving, fixing the size and shape of these instruments, we are imposed upon by the invention of the artist. To justify these engravings, there should be in existence authentic relics of the objects, or descriptions by contemporary writers: no such relics or descriptions can be found.

Let the fate of the *catomus* be a warning to the scientific martyrologist. To fix the precise nature of this instrument had for some time taxed the ingenuity of antiquarians; from merely signifying a rod, it had passed through the stages of a leathern whip, a scourge loaded with lead, and lastly, a scourge made of iron wires. It might have grown yet more formidable, had it not been discovered to owe its existence to a misapprehension of the adverbial phrase, κατ' ωμους, "upon the shoulders." *

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* Ducange, sub voce. Medieval writers copied the word from one another, without appearing to attach to it any distinct meaning: having invented the substantive, a *catomus*, they soon

On copper as well as on paper, martyrologists are incorrigible in their love of magnifying: a fragment of iron found in a cemetery, and rashly presumed to be the claw of an ungula, is published and illustrated by its discoverer: another writer, who has not seen the original, but nevertheless appears to know much more about it, adds a handle: a third, puts it in its complete form into the hands of a ferocious executioner, and buries the points in the side of a Christian.*

Happily for the credit of human nature, the tortures described by these writers are often altogether imaginary. When Gallonius accuses the pagans of tearing out and devouring the livers of Christians,

added the verb, to *catomise*. Nothing more certainly betrays the lateness of acts, than the use of such words as *catomare*, *catomidiare*, and *catomizare*, which could not have been invented as long as any recollection of the phrase κατ' ωμους remained. Ducange quotes from a certain breviary a passage descriptive of Eulalia's martyrdom: "Tunc Calpurnianus, turbido furore succensus, putans pudicam virginem more infantum a tergo corporis emendari, jubet per officium curatoris eam catomari. . . . Cumque catomaretur corpus ejus delicatum et sanctum, &c." These sentences, being found in a breviary, appear to have been read in church.

* Stories about martyrdom seem never to lose by repetition: Ruinart tells us that Domitius collected seven books of edicts against the Christians:—Lactantius, from whom he professes to quote, mentions the edicts of the persecutors as contained in the *seventh book* of the laws collected by Domitius. (Institutiones, lib. 5. cap. 11.) Prudentius says that Agnes was exposed in a vault at the corner of a street; Foxe, quoting directly from him, that she was exposed naked; and Surius adds, that the moment she was stripped, her hair grew down to her feet. But in this instance, "Prudentius prudentius loquitur."

there should be well authenticated instances to justify the charge; especially when that charge is backed by an engraving, in which is seen a mere boy engaged in tearing out a Christian's liver, while an assistant is ready with the fire and frying-pan in the foreground. Nicephorus, indeed, tells a story in point: at Heliopolis the pagans, under Julian, "killed Cyril a deacon, and tasted his liver. But they who had dared such things were immediately pursued by divine vengeance; for all who had shared in the crime lost, through a horrible mortification, their tongues, teeth, and palates, and even their eyes. By which wounds," adds the monkish translator, "was displayed the power and efficacy of the true religion." Theodoret had told the story seven centuries before, merely omitting the palates; but Sozomen, who about the same time described all the other martyrdoms that occurred at Heliopolis, entirely omits the story of Cyril.*

We have now followed the progress of martyrology from the time in which the catacombs received the fresh bodies of slaughtered believers, to the close of that long period of abandonment which followed the barbarian invasions. Knowing to what state martyrology had sunk when the catacombs were re-opened (for Bosio and Aringhi were contemporaries of Bolland and Gallonius), we are prepared to receive with caution the wondrous tales of the early explorers.

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* Nicephorus, lib. x. c. 9; Sozomen, lib. v. c. 9; Theodoreti, Hist. Eccles., lib. iii. c. 3.

At first, all the sepulchres were entitled graves of martyrs. But this was too extravagant to last long: it could not fail to occur to the learned, that but a small proportion of any church suffer martyrdom, even in the severest persecution; that the catacombs were the burial-place of all the faithful who died in the fifty years' peace between the times of Valerian and Diocletian, as well as during the century that followed the conversion of Constantine; and that during that century, thousands of Arians and Semi-arians had been laid beside the orthodox. It was, therefore, of the utmost importance to discover some method of distinguishing the graves; no assistance was to be derived from epitaphs, for out of about 70,000 graves, only five displayed inscriptions to martyrs: it followed, therefore, that if the ancients did in any manner record martyrdom, they did so by some symbol yet to be discovered. An appeal to history was equally unsatisfactory: no previous writer had mentioned a single mark or symbol used for the purpose. But, though foiled in their hopes of discovery, the Romans succeeded better in invention.

To appreciate the result of their labours, we must enter upon a slight digression. With most ancient nations, prevailed the custom of enclosing in the tomb a small cup or vase. This was used by the Romans to contain the tears shed by hired mourners, mixed with the gums or spices deposited in the sepulchre: hence, the phrase, "cum lacrymis posuerunt." Gutherius, noticing this custom, quotes a pagan epitaph, concluding with the words

* * * *

FVSCA MATER
AD LVCTVM ET GEMITVM RELICTA
EVM LACRIMIS ET OPOBALSAMO
VDVM
HOC SEPVLCHRO CONDIDIT

"His mother Fusca, left to sorrow and groaning, buried him, moist with tears and balsam, in this sepulchre."

In the urns, Gutherius tells us, were enclosed the bones and ashes, together with a glass vessel filled with tears and spices.* The Christians, though rejecting the name *lacrymatory*, retained the cup, probably to hold spices only, for tears were not a part of their public funeral solemnity. Whatever sorrow was indulged in private, the expression "*buried with tears*" occurs very seldom on Christian grave-stones. Of these spices, myrrh was the most usually employed: "that myrrh is a symbol of death," says Gregory of Nyssa, "none who are versed in sacred Scripture can doubt."† And long afterwards, Jacopone da Todi describes the offerings of the eastern sages:

"Gold to the kingly,
Incense to the priestly,
Myrrh to the mortal."‡

The cup used in the catacombs varies in shape from the tall, thin lacrymatory of the heathen, to the open saucer of painted glass employed in the

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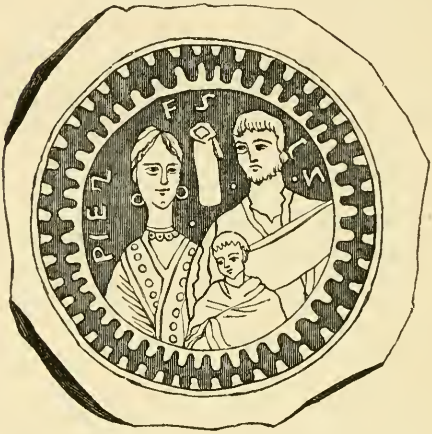
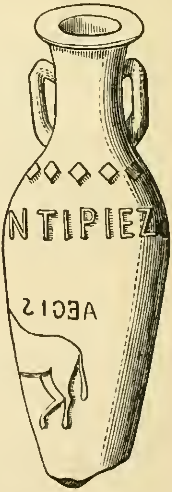
* Gutherius de Jure Manium, in Gronovio, t. xii. p. 1247. 1155.

† In Cantic. Canticorum, homil. xii.

‡ Hymn, beginning "Verbum Caro factum est," ed. 1497.



fifth century. A fragment here copied from Buonarotti, bears the usual festive inscription. PIE ZESE, "Drink and live," apparently referring to the sacramental cup.



Buonarotti* has also represented vessels that nearly approach the lachrymatory form; the annexed has the inscription.

VINCENTI PIE ZESE—"Vincent, drink and live."

Three conquering horses are seen upon the lower part of the fragment. They are common symbols of a course well finished: and probably in this instance contain an allusion to the name of Vincent.

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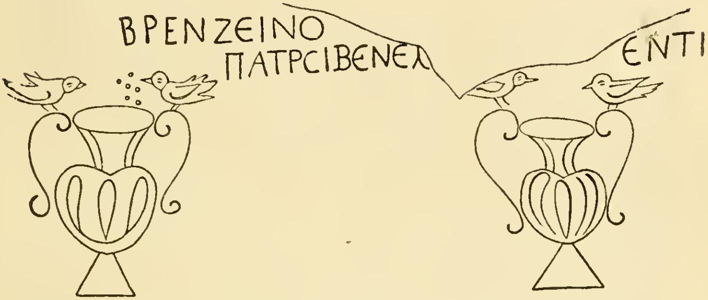
[*] Buonarotti, Vetri Antichi.

The inscription round the lower part is AEGIS OIKOYMENE ZEP, reversed.

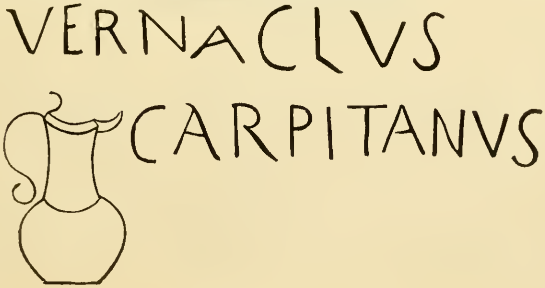
The cup, so often enclosed in the tomb, or cemented to the rock outside, is sometimes merely drawn upon the gravestone, as in the accompanying fac-simile. (Lap. Gall.)



Read — Brenzeino patri benemerenti. "To Brenzeinus, my well-deserving father."

The expedient of representing in this manner, objects which the poverty of friends prevented them from depositing beside the corpse, is one to which continued recourse was had by the early Christians. This observation may be verified in its most extended sense: whatever is found enclosed in graves is also seen figured on tombstones.

In the epitaph of Vernaclus Carpitanus, the cup is of a different shape. (Lap. Gall.)



The objects found in the catacombs, as well as the lower part of the graves themselves, are often tinged with a red matter produced by decomposition of either the bodies, the spices, or the superincumbent soil. Bosio, while excavating and exploring graves, imagined that this red matter was dried blood, and, by a strange confusion of ideas, the blood of martyrs. As the cups were generally tinged with the same colour, he pushed his theory a step further; boldly asserting that these vessels had been originally filled with the blood of martyrs, and that none but martyrs' graves displayed them.

This hypothesis of Bosio possessed one great advantage; being entirely founded upon fancy, it required no proof: moreover, it was extremely convenient. The Church of Rome received it with enthusiasm, and the "Congregation of Relics," held in 1668, issued a decree in confirmation: "The holy congregation, having carefully examined the matter, decides that the palm and vessel tinged with blood are to be considered most certain signs of martyrdom: the investigation of other symbols is deferred for the present."

The more ancient of these cups appear to have contained no inscription; and those which bear inscriptions in honour of saints, cannot be placed earlier than the end of the fourth century. Of the names of saints found on them, that of Agnes is the most usual, generally written

ANNES:

next in frequency occur the names and portraits of

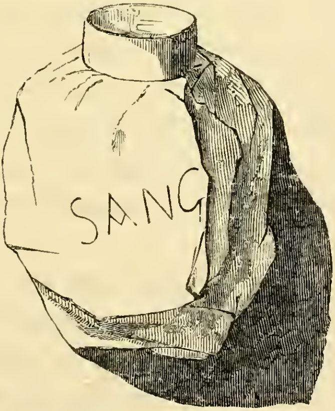
Peter and Paul. We have already seen a vase marked with the name of Vincent. Aringhi gives a broken cup with the words:

VIVAS IN CR
LAVRENTIO

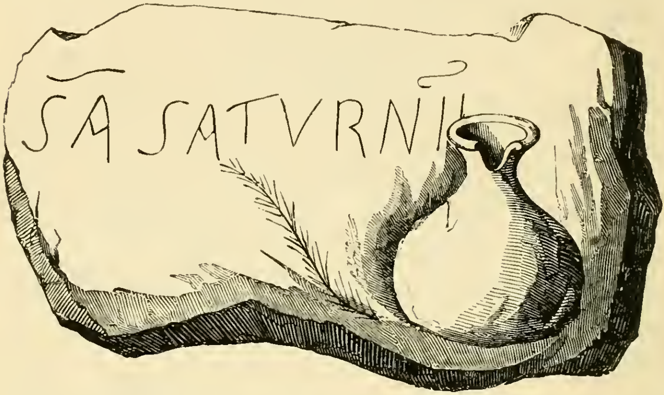
Another, also dedicated to St. Laurence, has been found:

VITO——IVAS IN NOMINE LAVRETI
"Victoria, may you live. In the name of Laurence."

Bosio discovered two of these vessels which appeared to confirm his theory; they are published in the Roma Sotteranea, as well as in the works of Aringhi, Boldetti, &c. But the plates are so little like each other, as to leave room for doubting the precise form of the letters inscribed:



In this case, Bosio departed from the usual meaning of the inscriptions found on cups, and read SANGVIS, and SANGVIS SATVRNINI—"the blood of Saturninus." Whatever weight may be attached to the small stroke which distinguishes G from C, when found upon the rough surface of a mass of cement, partially corroded by the damp of thirteen centuries, it does not warrant us in reading the inscriptions otherwise than Sancti—, and Sancti Saturnini.



The chemist Leibnitz was requested to report upon the red matter contained in the cups. This substance, proving soluble in muriate of ammonia, was rightly inferred to be of organic origin, and not the result of mineral impregnation. Leibnitz, however, took care not to commit himself by any positive assertion.

The Roman antiquarians have shown great diligence in collecting from the Acts of the Martyrs every passage in which blood is mentioned: but among these there is not one that describes its preservation in a cup, or the burial of it beside a martyr's grave. St. Praxedes, having with great care collected on a sponge the blood of some martyrs, buried it beside the tomb of her own father. Not more to the purpose is the quotation from Prudentius, describing the death of Vincent, and the anxiety of the Christians to obtain his blood. "One covers with kisses the double furrows of the ungula; another is glad to wipe the purple stream from his body: many dip a cloth in the dripping blood, that they may keep it at home, as a sacred palladium for their posterity." The same care was employed to collect the blood of Hippolytus, who had been dragged to pieces by a wild horse. Before the execution of Theodora, her friends covered the floor with their garments, that none of her blood might fall to the ground. Lysimachus is represented as saying to his officers, "Gather up all his limbs which are cut off, and carefully scrape up the blood, lest any remain." It is generally said that the blood of Cyprian was preserved, though the circumstance is not mentioned by his biographer Pontius.

With as little success do the Roman writers quote the poet's reflection on the martyrdom of Quirinus. The bishop had been drowned; and Prudentius, lamenting his fate, takes comfort from the consideration that he was equally a martyr, though without bloodshed.

Nil refert, vitreô æquore,
An de flumine sanguinis
Tinguat passio Martyrem ;
Æquè gloria provenit,
Fluctu quolibet uvida.

The deep cold waters close o'er one ;
Another sheds a crimson river :
No matter ; either stream returns
A life to the Eternal Giver :
Each tinges with a glorious dye
The martyr's robe of victory.

The blood-cup theory fails when practically applied to distinguish the graves in the catacombs; the tomb of Gordianus martyr had no cup, and that of a certain Constantia was provided with one: but this young person cannot be considered a martyr, since her epitaph contravenes all that we know of the martyr spirit in the ancient church:

NIMIVM CITO DECIDISTI
CONSTANTIA MIRVM
PVLCHRITVDINIS ATQUE
IDONITATI QVÆ VIXIT ANNIS
XVIIII MEN · VI · DIE XVI
CONSTANTIA IN PACE

Too soon hast thou fallen, Constantia, of wonderful beauty and goodness. Who lived 19 years, 6 months, and 16 days. Constantia in peace. (Aringhi.)

History affords us no proof that symbols were employed to distinguish a martyr's grave: the expression "a martyr's epitaph" occurs once in the Peristephanon, and Prudentius describes some tablets in the catacombs displaying "a martyr's name, or some anagram."

It is suggested by Roestell, and Raoul Rochette seems disposed to agree with him, that the vessels in question were intended as sacramental cups, inscribed with the word *blood*, a figurative expression for wine, the dry lees of which furnished the organic matter of the analysis. In support of this conjecture he adduces the custom, at one time known, though always condemned by the Church, of administering the sacrament to the dead. "Let no one," says the Quinisextan Council, "offer the Eucharist to the dead: for it is written, 'Take and eat.' Now the dead can neither take nor eat." But this heterodox custom of the seventh century will scarcely account for the more ancient cups and vases: an easier explanation may be found in the Agape held over the grave; or in the wish to express the deceased to have been a communicant.

In justice to the theory of Bosio, it must be told that all antiquarians of the Roman communion, excepting the two last named, have been unanimous in receiving it. A glance at some of those authors will show to what conclusions it has led them.

The much esteemed and ingenious Lupi, a priest, published in 1753 some dissertations on ancient church subjects; among others there is one on Innocentius, Boy and Martyr; or to speak more accurately, a small skeleton found in a grave, well preserved, accompanied by a cup. "Possessing," says Lupi, "neither the acts of his martyrdom nor his epitaph, we cannot easily decide upon the manner of his death. An examination of his bones makes it probable that he died under the plumbatæ, because one of the shoulder blades of the glorious little saint (Santino) was found broken, as if by the force of the leaden blows: besides which, several of the vertebræ and ribs are broken, as if by violence. The bone called by anatomists *sacrum* is also crumbled and separated from its great ischiatic processes."

The bones of this martyr must have lain in the grave upwards of fourteen centuries, supposing him to have suffered in the last persecution. It cannot but surprise us to find the skeleton of a child, imperfectly ossified, and buried in a damp rocky cell, preserving any vestige of its original form; nor is the ignorance of the discoverer less astonishing, in arguing, from a slight decay which it had undergone, violence inflicted during life. Had the sacrum been still attached to the ischiatic processes, and had its spongy structure preserved its shape, the grave antiquarian might with greater justice have boasted the miraculous preservation of the relics. The reader may remember a drawing in the third chapter of this work, representing a little dust as the sole residue of a full-grown skeleton: there is, therefore, nothing remarkable in the fact, that the shoulder blade and ribs of Innocentius have fallen into pieces. The sex of a skeleton of that age must always be doubtful: we are, therefore, unable to ascertain a single circumstance regarding this supposed martyr,—whether boy or girl, what his name, and whether or not he died a violent death: all is matter of conjecture: the blood cup theory supports the whole weight of his saintship and martyr glory.

Lupi, though confessing his entire ignorance of the saint's history, confidently publishes his name. At first sight he may appear to have drawn his information from some other source, not formally alluded to; but Mabillon spares us the trouble of searching further. In the catacombs, he tells us, "there are dug up two sorts of bodies; the one with neither name nor inscription, the other with one or both. Saints of the first kind have names given them by the cardinal vicar, or by the bishop who presides over the pontifical chapel. Saints of this description are said to be baptized." *

Aringhi's manner of speculating upon the mode of martyrdom of the catacomb saints is not better than that of Lupi. "Many of the heads of Christ's martyrs still exhibited marks of the plumbatæ, that is, scourges loaded with lead, with which they were formerly bruised by the cruel hand of the executioner." †

The mistakes made in consequence of this theory, have, at times, disgusted the more learned members of the Roman communion. Raoul Rochette tells us of Benerus, a new saint transported from Rome to Perugia in 1803, on whose epitaph is the figure of a forceps accompanied by the words,—

D · M · S ·
BENERVS · VIXIT · ANNOS
XXIII · MESES VII ·

On this he observes, "In the absence of any certain signs of Christianity, this instrument may be con-

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* In making this admission, Mabillon takes his revenge for the impostures which were palmed upon him in Rome: he adds part of the service for proving relics:

"O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Psalm. Let God arise; to, O sing unto the Lord.

Hymn. Veni Creator.

Prayer. O God, to whom the hearts of the faithful," &c.

Mabillon's posthumous works, vol. ii. 251. 287.

† Lib. iii. c. 22.

sidered as belonging to his profession. Benerus, therefore, may have been a poor blacksmith, Christian if you will, or Pagan, which supposition accords better with the character of his epitaph, excepting for the vessel of blood found in his grave, which is considered an indubitable sign of Christian sanctity." * The real name is probably Venerius.

A remarkable instance of carelessness in the manufacture of saints, is mentioned by Mabillon, as having occurred at Tolosa very shortly before he wrote. An inscription was found in the Roman catacombs, running thus:—

D · M
JVLIA · EVODIA · FILIA · FECIT
CASTAE · MATRI · ET · BENEMERENTI
QVAE · VIXIT · ANNIS · LXX

Upon the strength of this epitaph, raised by Julia Euodia to her chaste and well-deserving mother, containing no signs of Christianity, but rather the reverse, the bones found in that grave were esteemed holy, and were attributed to St. Julia Euodia, instead of her "chaste mother." From the number of Pagan tombstones applied to Christian purposes in the later times of the emperors, we require some specific evidence to assure us of the Christian origin of any tablet found in the catacombs.

As if to make amends for his attack upon the

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* Mémoires de l'Académie des Belles Lettres et d'Inscriptions, tom. xiii. This memoir must place M. R. Rochette in the highest rank of modern antiquarians.

relics of the catacombs, Mabillon published a story intended to reflect credit upon the sagacity of the pontifical authorities. While engaged in turning over the papers in the Barberini library, he met with the correspondence relative to a pseudo-saint discovered in Spain. Some well-meaning persons having met with an ancient stone, inscribed with the letters "S· VIAR." concluded it to be the epitaph of a Saint Viar. Nothing daunted by the singularity of the name, or the total want of evidence in support of his sanctity, they boldly established his worship. But the zeal of his admirers, though it had conferred the honours of saintship, was unable to secure his immortality; for, on their application to Urban for indulgences, the Roman antiquarians required some proof of his existence. The stone was, therefore, forwarded to Rome, where it was immediately seen to be the fragment of an inscription to a PræfectuS· VIARum, or Curator of the Ways.

Besides the cup, some other appendages to the grave have been brought forward as evidences of martyrdom. But all these are destitute of proof, although one, the praying figure sculptured on the gravestone, enlists our sympathy in its favour. That a martyr, in imitation of Stephen praying for his murderers, should be known on the sepulchral tablet, only by prayer, is what every Christian would be ready to believe, and hope to be true. But the absence of all evidence leads us to reject the praying figure as a sign of martyrdom, and to refer it to the class of symbols expressive of Christian sentiments. Moreover, these figures often occur on handsome marble sarcophagi of the fourth and fifth centuries, in which case they cannot be considered as indicative of martyrdom.

Although at one time appearing to support the symbols of martyrdom, Raoul Rochette betrays a different opinion in the following striking passage: —"The bones of the martyrs are the sole remains of those heroes of the faith, even in their sepulchres: cups and fragments of glass, instruments of their trades, or symbols of their faith, are the only monuments left of their life or of their death. . . . Perhaps I may be allowed to add," he continues, "that a series of paintings, like those of S. Stefano in Rotondo (a church in Rome), filled with all the scenes of barbarity which the rage of executioners could devise, or the constancy of martyrs support, honours less the faith which inspires such images, or which resisted such trials, than the paintings of the catacombs, generally so pure, so peaceful in their object and intention, where it seems that the Gospel ought to have met with no enemies, appearing so gentle, so ready to forgive: where the martyr is known only by prayer, and where Christianity reveals itself only by symbols of peace, of innocence, and of charity."* The work from which these lines are quoted is interdicted in Rome.

The implements marked upon the gravestones, or inclosed in the tombs of ancient Christians, have furnished much matter of discussion. The supposition that they were the instruments by which the deceased had suffered martyrdom, is urged by Aringhi * with considerable learning: for, unlike the blood-cup theory, this opinion boasts a shadow of support in history. Symeon Stylites, according to the legend, was buried with his iron bed: but Symeon Stylites was not a martyr, except to his own self-righteousness. Babylas, having died in chains, was buried in them: but this was at his own request, and the circumstance was thought so unusual as to claim the notice of many writers from Chrysostom downwards. The holy cross, if we are to believe the legend, was found entire beside the Saviour's grave: but to this we have to oppose the testimony of St. Luke, who tells us that the body was hastily taken down from the cross on the Friday evening, and buried without even the usual ceremonies. Nor was there afterwards an opportunity of adding the cross to the contents of the sepulchre, for its Occupant rose before the early dawn, anticipating the pious care of those who came to embalm the Incorruptible. For once, and once only, they who sought him early, found him not.†

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* Tableaux des Catacombs, p. 190.

Lastly, Aringhi gathers from Rabbinical writers,

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* Roma Subterranea, p. 685.

† The transaction called in our calendar the "Invention of the Cross" will have little weight with most English readers. From the general tenor of the Homily against peril of Idolatry, there is no reason for supposing that the Church of England intended to support this legend, any more than that of the

that Jews who had been stoned or beheaded, were buried with the swords or stones employed in their execution.

On the other hand, we have no evidence whatever that the Christians adopted the custom of burying instruments of death with the martyrs. The habit of designing the emblems of a trade or profession upon the tombstone, was extremely common, as will be seen in the chapter treating of symbols: and to inclose in the tomb itself objects of the toilette, children's playthings, &c., was a heathen custom, almost universally adopted by the Christians.

Without anticipating what will be said in the following chapter, it may be remarked here, that these objects, if merely an imitation of the instruments of torture, are of no value as actual relics of the martyrs: and if it is pretended that they were really employed in the execution of those with whose bodies they were interred, we may answer, that it is incredible that the Christians should have obtained from the Pagan authorities their instru-

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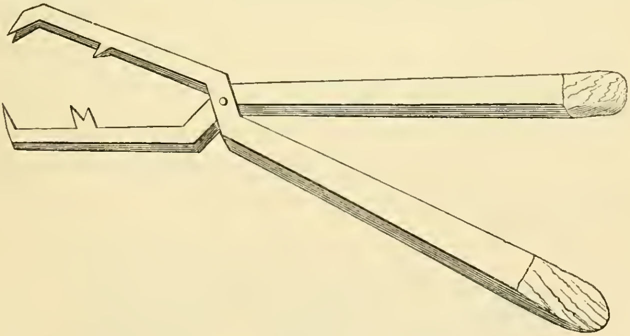
"Conception of the Virgin Mary," which, together with the "Name of Jesus," and "O Sapientia," still appear in the calendar. The circumstance most unfavourable to our belief in the miraculous preservation of the cross, is the existence of "pious frauds," such as the suspicious "inventions" in the time of Ambrose. The discovery of the true cross was firmly believed in at the time: Paulinus forwarded to his brother a splinter of the wood, as a fragment of that cross, "on account of which, with a trembling world, a fugitive sun, and the uprising of the dead from their shivered monuments, nature was shaken to her centre." The apostles saw no cross when they looked into the sepulchre.

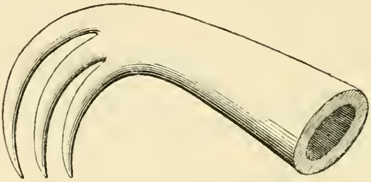
ments of punishment, in order to add to the honours of the martyr's funeral.

The extreme fewness of the implements found in the catacombs, compared with the number of martyrs known to have been buried there, is enough to disprove the opinion that they belong to martyrdom. The whole stock discovered consists of three hooks and a comb: and although the Vatican museum contains several specimens of torturing weapons, they are too new-looking to have deceived even the Roman antiquarians. There is nothing in their appearance to forbid the supposition that they are taken from the chambers of the Holy Inquisition.

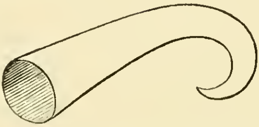
Of the four fragments discovered in the catacombs, the first is part of an iron forceps with which were found the remains of wooden handles.



From what we can learn from history, this instrument may be supposed to resemble the *ungula*, with which malefactors were torn on the sides. Almost all authentic records of martyrdom after the year 150, assure us that this punishment was generally inflicted on the Christians. The wounds thus produced were termed *bisulca*, — consisting of two furrows. Another instrument of the same kind is given by Aringhi.



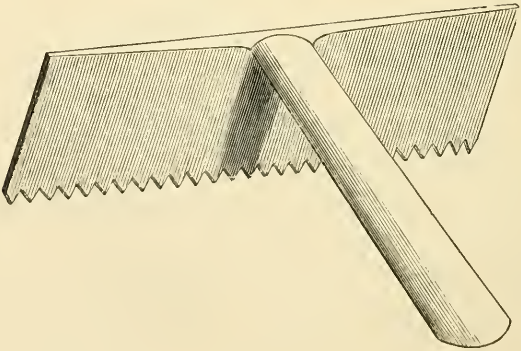
With this may be compared a hook engraved upon a pagan tombstone, and published by Gruter. (p. 810.)

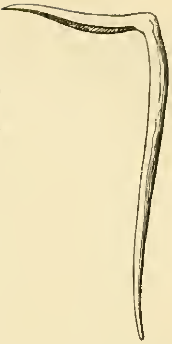


Q . NAVICVLARIS
VICTORINVS VAL .
SEVERAE CONIVG .
SAN .

It cannot be pretended that the instrument of execution was displayed upon the gravestone of a pagan, as there was no credit in having suffered as an ordinary malefactor. The point is so turned inwards, as to make this instrument useless for cutting.

The third was discovered in the cemetery of Calepodius; the annexed sketch is copied from Boldetti. It has been considered a comb for tearing the flesh of the martyrs.





The fourth, we are told by Aringhi, was found in the cemetery of Agnes; he thinks it may have been used for dragging the bodies of martyrs after death.

From this slight history of Roman martyrology, it appears that for the first three hundred years the Church left no record of persecution, beyond a few epistles, epitaphs, and acts, which contain nearly all that is known of the details of ancient martyrdom. However deeply we may regret the absence of further information, we shall not find the want supplied by later writers, who, having sunk low in the fifth century, continued to sink still lower till the seventeenth: up to which time their productions were calculated, in the words of the Quinisextan canon, "to bring the martyrs into discredit and to drive the reader into infidelity." The seventeenth century witnessed an endeavour to place the subject upon a better footing, and by scientific refinements to throw an air of accuracy over the exaggerated fictions of earlier times. But the attempt was eminently unsuccessful: and the signs fixed upon as decisive of martyrdom have been since abandoned, with the exception of one, which, though still supported beyond the Alps, is already given up by Raoul Rochette and Roestell, both among the first of living antiquarians. In consequence of the Roman decrees, half Europe is now supplied with the relics of ordinary persons, lapsed, heterodox, or otherwise unworthy of distinction, enshrined in gold and silver as the remains of faithful martyrs. Less modest in their ignorance than the men of Athens, the worshippers of catacomb saints allowed of no anonymous divinity, but instituted a form of baptism for the unknown gods.* Little thought the ancient retailer of second-hand gravestones, that, thanks to his carelessness in not erasing the name of Benerus, the heathen blacksmith should, in the 19th century, attain to the honours of a Christian martyr. Let no one say that the days of superstition have passed away, when even our own age contributes to swell that order of saints of which the first members were Gervasius and Protasius, and the too well preserved Nazarius.

The origin of martyr-worship belongs to the middle of the fourth century; for martyrs and martyr-worship did not exist in the Church at the same time. During persecution, the merit of martyrs may have been at times over rated: but even this is quite distinct from any form of worship afterwards paid to them. Eusebius well argues, that, if Stephen interceded for the forgiveness of his murderers, in the case of one at least, with signal success, the confessor might well pray for the restoration of his lapsed brethren; but here Eusebius stops, nor ventures to set up the departed spirit as a mediator between God and man. From the first petition addressed to the imprisoned confessor, as to a friend of approved faith, the full grown superstition was reached by natural and easy steps. The martyr next appears as a being of superior sanctity, as one who has conferred an obligation upon his Master, and is entitled to the worth of it in favour of others: his intercession with the Church in behalf of the lapsed, is confounded with mediation between God and man: in after times the historian exaggerates the power attributed to him in his lifetime: and when at last he is described as ascending to heaven, charged with petitions to be presented before the throne, and followed thither by fresh prayers and praises, — a little more, and the historian might be celebrating the Protomartyr Himself again incarnate — again challenging the exclamation, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"

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* See in Mabillon's posthumous works, vol. ii., a treatise " On the worship of unknown Saints." The illustrious Gallican could perceive that his transalpine brethren were too superstitious, but " whom they ignorantly worshipped" he was not able to tell them.

The prayers addressed to martyrs even assumed the form of those used in divine worship. Of such a character is the prayer of Prudentius to Vincent, in the form of a litany: —

Per te, per illum carcerem,
Honoris augmentum tui,
Per vincla, flammas, ungulas,
Per carceralem stipitem:
Per fragmen illud testeum,
Quô parta crevit gloria;
Et quem trementes posteri

Exosculamur lectulum,
Miserere nostrarum precum.

By thyself, renowned in story,
By that prison, scene of glory,
  By those chains and fires:
By the stake, the harrowing prong;
By each flint whose edge inspires
  Higher raptures to my song:
By that couch of bitterness
Which with trembling lips we press,
  Pitying, aid our prayer.

The power at first given to martyrs was entirely limited to the relaxation of ecclesiastical penance. It was also customary to restore to favour, open offenders who had given proof of sincere repentance by undergoing suffering for the sake of religion. This ground of reconciliation was doubtless liable to be abused. Tertullian, when far gone in Montanism, accused the Church of receiving persons supposed to have compounded with the heathen governor for a short imprisonment or exile. What especially provoked his invective, was the case of some, who, by this subterfuge, had not only cleared their own character, but had been allowed to intercede with the church in behalf of others.

"You have granted such power to your martyrs, that whoever puts on by agreement the easy chains now first called imprisonment, is immediately surrounded by the impure: now resound the prayers, now overflow the tears, of every one that is defiled; nor do any bribe their way to the prison, more than they who have lost access to the church. · · · Some fly to the mines, and return communicants, whereas they need another martyrdom for the offences committed since their first. For who while on earth and in the flesh is without sin? especially a confessor living in the world, a suppliant to the ungodly, under obligations to the profligate and unclean? Imagine his head already under the impending sword: grant that his body is now stretched upon the cross; allow that he is actually at the stake, with the lion let loose—or on the wheel, with the fire lighted—even in the very security and possession of martyrdom: who can suffer him, a mere man, to grant what is the prerogative of God alone?—God, who has condemned such an assumption beyond excuse, for, as far as I know, the Apostles, though martyrs themselves, never pretended to it."*

Tertullian, though appealing to the example of the Apostles, appears to forget that St. Paul not only greatly exceeded the power supposed to be claimed by martyrs, but recommended to the Corinthians that line of conduct, with which Tertullian now reproaches the church—"Ye ought to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." It was for having shown this lenity that Tertullian designated the Catholics by the epithet Psychici or Carnal; and the restoration of offenders less heinous than the Corinthian drew forth the tract "De Pudicitia," from which the preceding sentences are quoted.

Cyprian, writing in 251, lays down this rule for the guidance of his people, many of whom were ready to overrate the interest which the martyrs possessed in the court of heaven: "Let no man delude or deceive himself; the Lord alone can show mercy. The sins committed against Himself can be forgiven only by Him who bore our sins and suffered for us, and whom God delivered for our offences." With this statement, it is difficult to reconcile an expression which follows, allowing the possible efficacy of martyr-merit at the day of judgment, though this concession is carefully guarded by a caution against building upon it: "lest the offender should add to his other misfortune the curse denounced by God against such as trust in man. The Lord is the object of prayer, He alone is to be pacified by our humiliation." *

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* De Pudicitia, cap. 22.

The martyr's surrender of his body to the executioner was esteemed an act of faith: the believer entered into a fresh covenant, giving up his life for Christ, and claiming eternal life with Him. "Martyrdom," observes Tertullian, "is a baptism: 'I have a baptism to be baptized with.'" Thus martyrdom came to be regarded as a sacrament, and one of certain efficacy, seeing that no subsequent fall could annul its power. "Be thou faithful unto death," was evermore whispered in the ear of the confessor, "and I will give thee a crown of life." Was the promise claimed too absolutely, and without sufficient regard to the motives which led to martyrdom? Or was too exclusive importance attached to the declaration, that, "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation?" In an age so beset with terrors, was it presumptuous to take as the motto of the confessor, "He that loseth his life

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* Cyprian, de Lapsis, c. xi.

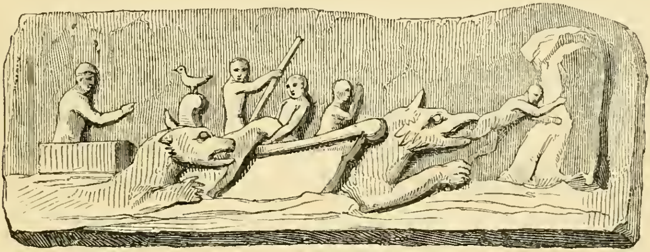
for my sake, the same shall find it?" Be this as it may, primitive martyrdom appears to have contributed largely to the conversion of the world; for the rapid extension of Christianity almost ceased within a few years after the last persecution.

CHAP. V.

THE SYMBOLS USED IN THE CATACOMBS.

The sudden falling off in Roman art during its transition from Pagan to Christian hands, is partly to be explained by the inferior station in society occupied by the first converts. It cannot be said that Christianity suffered the arts to decline merely from want of patronage, for all the talent available was dedicated to her service, as soon as she was enabled to assert her dominion. But, up to that time, the assistance which she sought from art was of a character altogether unfavourable to the display of its power. In works executed by Christians before the fourth century, truth of representation was a matter of indifference. A cross, however rudely expressed, perfectly symbolised their faith: the most elaborate bas-relief of the figure, crowned and jewelled, told no more.

This levelling all distinction between degrees of skill, proved fatal to the knowledge of proportion and design. The symbolic meaning, since it claimed exclusive consideration, superseded all necessity of pleasing the eye, and even of satisfying the judgment: the escape of Jonah from the whale did not the less comfortably typify the resurrection of the dead, because the fish was chimera-like, the ship a mere boat, and the sea a rivulet: nor did faith stumble at the anachronism of Noah receiving the dove, in the background of the scene.*



The peculiarities of this style of art, if so dignified a name may be given to it, will claim notice in another place; at present we have to do with the tendency to reduce to a hieroglyphic form the representation of the elements of our religion. By *hieroglyphic* is meant the appropriation of some one figure to the expression of a particular idea; thus the raising of Lazarus was used as a symbol of the resurrection; and the dove, as an emblem of peace with God.

It is not to the taste and imagination that such works were addressed; the only qualification necessary for their comprehension was faith, which supplied the life and beauty wanting to the misshapen forms. In these, till understood, there was nothing attractive: but when interpreted, and viewed by the believing eye, they told of a rest from trouble, compared to which, "the golden slumber on a bed of heaped Elysian flowers" was but an unquiet dream.

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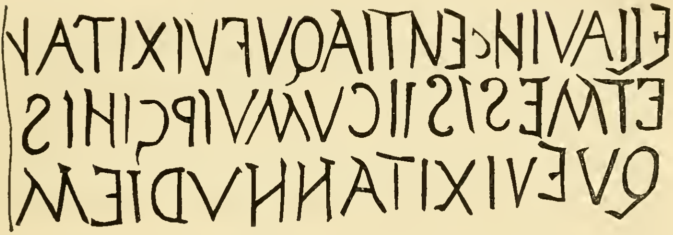
* From a sarcophagus in the Vatican Library, engraved by Aringhi, Bottari, &c.

So entirely had the fine arts been appropriated to the use of polytheism, that it was only under the severest restrictions that they could be admitted to the service of the Church. With the monogamist Tertullian, to paint was a crime to be classed with second marriages: he says of Hermogenes, "He paints unlawfully, he marries repeatedly: the law of God, when in favour of his passions, he approves; when against his art, he despises." Most narrowly watched of all, sculpture had to surrender many of its characteristics, before it could pass for an auxiliary to Christianity: how effectually its fair proportions were disguised may be seen by comparing with the bas-reliefs of the Vatican Library the contents of the adjoining museums.

Perhaps the cause which most powerfully contributed to the adoption of Christian symbols, was the ignorance of reading and writing then prevalent. Books, and even inscriptions, were for the learned: unlettered survivors were in no way consoled by the epitaph of the deceased, or enlightened by the figures expressing his age and the day of his death. In some instances the most absurd mistakes of the stone-cutter have passed unaltered. The annexed inscription (from the Lapidarian Gallery) is entirely reversed: and the husband of Elia seems to have had no friend to point out to him the error, and put him upon obtaining a more intelligible record of his wife.



This epitaph may be read by the help of a mirror, and then exhibits only the N reversed. The stone-cutter has probably endeavoured to take off upon the marble the impression of a written inscription: — Elia Vincentia, who lived — years and 2 months. She lived with Virginius a year and a day.

Even when the stone-cutter has performed his task unexceptionably, the orthography of some epitaphs is so faulty as almost to frustrate their intention. Since the invention of printing, spelling has become comparatively fixed, even to the lowest class of writers; and we can imagine no modern inscription so miserably conceived as the annexed:

IIBER QVI VIXI QVAI QVO
PARE IVA ANOIVE I ANORV
M PLVI MINVI XXX I PACE.

Read—Liber, qui vixit cum compare sua annum I. Annorum plus minus xxx. in pace. In Christo.

For unlettered persons, another method of representation was necessary; and the symbols, though they imperfectly supplied the deficiency, were the only substitutes known. This view is forced upon us by the existence of phonetic signs: such as the ass on the tomb of Onager, and the lion on that of Leo: an idea so strange, and to our taste so bordering upon caricature, that it can only be explained by the necessity for some characteristic mark of the deceased, intelligible to his non-reading relations. The friends of Leo searching for his tomb, discover the sculptured lion: the most ignorant knows enough to read "Leo."

In the difficulty of distinguishing a tomb, the most trifling object was often adopted as a characteristic mark. Mabillon, when taken through the catacombs by Fabretti, noticed a broken Egyptian idol set up beside a grave. Fabretti maintained that it was no mark of idolatrous feeling, but merely an abridged representation of the raising of Lazarus, who always appears as a mummy in catacomb paintings.*

The symbols employed in the Catacombs are of three kinds: the larger proportion refer to the profession of Christianity, its doctrines, and its graces: a second class, of a purely secular description, indicate the trade of the deceased: and the remainder represent proper names. Of the first class, the cross, adopted by almost universal consent as "the sign of the Son of Man," claims our earliest consideration.

It would be difficult to find among mankind a more complete revolution of feeling, than that which has taken place concerning the instrument of crucifixion: once the object of horror and a symbol of disgrace, it is now the blessed emblem of our faith; the sign of admission, by baptism, to the benefits of Christian fellowship. "No effort of the imagination," says Milman*, "can dissipate the illusion of dignity which has gathered round it: it has been so long dissevered from all its coarse and humiliating associations, that it cannot be cast back and desecrated into its state of opprobrium and

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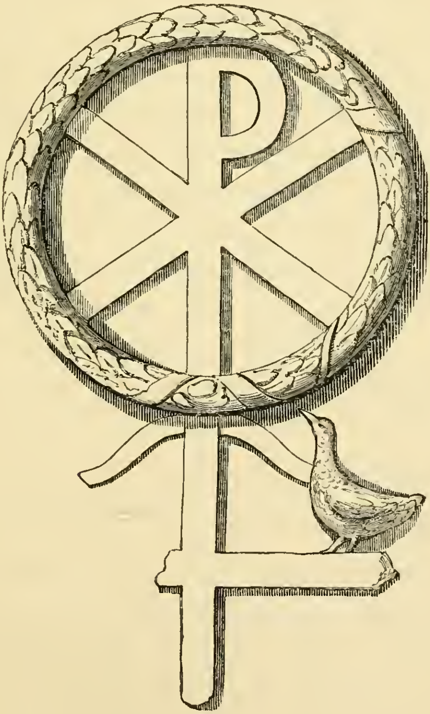
* Mabillon, Museum Italicum, vol. i. p. 137.



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* Bampton Lectures, p. 279.

contempt." How soon it began to be used as a symbol of Christianity, it is difficult to say: the gradual change to a crucifix is more easily traced.

But in undergoing this change, its original intention was lost: from being a token of joy, an object to be crowned with flowers, a sign in which to conquer,—it became a thing of tears and agony—a stock-subject with the artist anxious to display his power of representing anguish.

The above sketch, from a bas-relief in the Vatican library, shows the feeling connected with the cross by the ancient Church. The fragment of that emblem is surmounted by a garland of flowers enclosing the monogram of our Saviour's name: and upon it sits the dove, symbol of the peace with God purchased by the Redeemer's death. Such representations were common about the fourth century. Paulinus, who wrote inscriptions for the different parts of his basilica, placed beneath the crowned cross the words, "Bear the cross, you who wish to receive the crown." Elsewhere he says, in allusion to the same—

> "The labour and reward of the saints justly go together;
> The arduous cross, and the crown, its noble recompence."

The symbol of our religion was fancifully traced by the Fathers throughout the universe: the four points of the compass, the "height, breadth, length, and depth" of the Apostle, expressed, or were expressed by, the cross. A bird flying expanded its wings into the mystic figure. The cross explained everything: if Moses routed the Amalekites, it was by means of the outstretched arms which resembled the sign of redemption:

> "Et manibus tensis hostilia castra fugavit,
> Unus homo, crucis in formam pia brachia fingens."*

Prudentius, also:

> "Sublimis Amalech premit
> Crucis quod instar tunc fuit."

"He on high overcomes Amalech, because of his resemblance to a cross." The same posture in prayer was general among the Christians, and is mentioned by Tertullian. The very material of the cross did not escape application by Cyprian: "Their bodies should not shrink from clubs, who have all their hopes depending upon wood."

The cross was occasionally added to the Trisagion, a custom which scandalised some persons in the fifth century. The heathen, it was said, would believe from it, that God had been crucified. A few heterodox Christians found in it a pretext for the opinion, that the second person of the Trinity was divided. The sculptor was accused of making a Quaternity, by introducing a suffering Son in addition to the Three Persons of the Trisagion. The correspondence relative to the Council of

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* Gregory of Nazianzen, Carmina LXI. Gregory of Nyssa interprets it differently, "the raised hands signified the exaltation of the law." But about 150 Justin Martyr had written, "By his hands raised to heaven he signified the cross."—*Dial. cum Tryphone Judæo.* An argument well suited to the trifling character of the Jewish mind.

Chalcedon displays in a remarkable manner the jealousy with which the doctrine of the Church on these points was guarded.

In order to appreciate the simplicity of the ancient emblems, we must glance for a moment at the grosser representations resorted to in later times. The same doctrine of an atonement is declared by all, but each age selects in turn the triumph, the condescension, the humiliation, and the agony, of the Son of God. The symbolism of the first four centuries is uniformly joyful and triumphant; Pilate may set a seal upon the sepulchre, and the soldiers may repeat their idle tale: but the Church knows better: her Christ is living, and, thinking rather of His resurrection than of His death, she crowns the cross with flowers. The primitive symbols were also as rudimentary as they were cheerful: two crossed lines recorded the whole story of the passion. In course of time, faith begins to cool: the sculptor finds it necessary to suggest rather more strongly the meaning of the symbol. About the year 400, there appears at the foot of the cross a white lamb; by the help of this sacrificial emblem mankind contrives to remember the atonement for three hundred years longer. In the year 706, the Quinisextan council took away the lamb *, and painted in its place a living man; at first seen

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* Canon 82. "We ordain that the representation in human form of Christ our God, who takes away the sin of the world, be henceforward set up, and painted, in the place of the ancient lamb."

standing beneath the cross, with arms extended, as if in prayer. This affecting representation seems to have lasted out that century: in the ninth, the painter raised his Christ to the level of the transverse beam: the darkened sun and moon now appear above the cross; but He still lives and prays with hands unconfined. In the tenth century, Christ is first represented as dead, the nails being driven into the hands and feet: about the thirteenth, the head droops on one side.

Some slight alterations still take place: the dress, at first extending from the neck to the feet, is reduced to a short wrapper reaching from the waist to the knees; this is the form most characteristic of the pure mediæval style. The narrowest drapery indicates the approach of the revival.

We have thus traced to its most mournful phase the transformation of Christian symbolism; a change which forms part of the great problem of the dark ages: whatever may be the cause, the cheerful conceptions of the early Church, itself nursed in scenes of horrible realities, became too simple and refined for after times. The Byzantine paintings contained in the cabinets of the Vatican library forcibly display this taste. In that small museum, deserving of much more attention than it receives, every subject, from the treatment of the artist, becomes more or less distressing: the Divine Infant, with a countenance destitute of youthful expression, excites no sympathy for the helpless offspring of the Virgin: and the "man of sorrows," a more usual object of representation, covered with triangular splashes of blood, with a face indicative of hopeless anguish, intense in expression, and not deficient in execution, illustrates less the Redeemer's life than a dark page in the history of Christendom. To this school of art, which comes down to the twelfth century, the western world added sculpture, forbidden by the iconoclast zeal of the East: but both divisions of Christendom underwent the same fate: the sky of sacred art darkened, as the Saviour's countenance, its proper sun, shed a more disastrous light over its scenes of woe; till the last glimmering of Divine majesty suffered total eclipse from the exclusive display of agonised humanity.

Abuses generally enter the church as imperfect methods of remedying opposite evils. Better to paint the crucifixion in our own blood, than to allow it to slip from our creed. With all the grossness of mediæval art, it possessed this redeeming characteristic, that it struggled hard to counteract the mischief done by the schoolmen. While these last were employed in throwing up cloud after cloud between man and his Redeemer, the painter did his utmost to fix the vanishing object, if only on canvas—to paint a Saviour while works and saint-merit left a Saviour to be painted. Passing by the cradle of Bethlehem, in which, as his successors delight to prove to us, the "ox knew his Owner, and the ass his Master's crib," he fastened upon Golgotha. The Passion seemed to include the whole life of Christ: then was He most a king, when crowned with thorns; then most honoured, when soldiers bowed the knee in derision. Plunging into the subject with that earnestness in which lay his only strength, the artist painted with all the expression, that is with all the horror, he could command. The hymn-writers seconded his efforts; unable to invent, they repeated with enthusiasm the details of the Passion:

> Hail! when buffeted with palms:
> Hail! when crowned with thorns:
> Hail! when fastened to the cross:
> Hail! when pierced at eventide:
>
> See, I adore Thee in spirit and in truth; have mercy upon me. Amen.*

The painter having developed the symbol of the Passion from the simple cross to the complete painting, was followed by the sculptor, who, beginning in the eleventh century with a mere bas-relief, in the fourteenth arrived at the portable crucifix. This was material enough: faith had been superseded by sight, and sight by touch: but the crucifix was still imperfect, it could neither speak nor move. How could this defect be remedied?

The living crucifix was first produced in the person of St. Francis of Assisi, in the year 1223. In what manner his "five wounds" were produced, we do not know; the jesting accounts of the Dominicans are not to be trusted. The Franciscan stigmata, however, are not to be regarded merely as the work of a superstitious monk, but rather as of an age, ready to give up as hopeless the attempt to walk any longer by faith. There is a melancholy reality in the expression "frigerante mundo" occurring in the prayer which the Roman church orders for St. Francis' day: "O Lord Jesus Christ, who, *when the world was growing cold*, didst, in the flesh of our most blessed Father Francis, renew the holy marks of thy passion, to the inflaming of our hearts with the fire of thy love: mercifully grant that by his merits and prayers we may daily bear the cross, and bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." "From henceforth," concludes the proper lesson for the day, throwing a halo round the imposture, "from henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." *

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* From a MS. Missal in St. George's Library, Windsor.

Ave; palmis alapatus:
Ave; spinis coronatus:
Ave; cruci mancipatus:
Ave; sero lanceatus:

Ecce, te adoro in spiritu et veritate; miserere mei: Amen.

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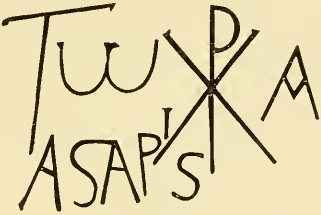
* Breviarium Romanum, A. D. 1661. Stigmata S. P. N. Francisci. The trick of the stigmata afterwards grew common; Gertrude had five wounds that bled at the canonical hours. (Bolland's Saints, vol. i., January 6.) Ludvina had the five wounds imprinted by Christ, but being of a retiring disposition, she begged that they might be replaced by internal suffering. (Ribadeneira, April 14.) Catherine of Sienna found the wound in the side so painful, that she prayed for mitigation of the anguish, lest she should die forthwith. This was about 1370. (Ribadeneira, April 29.)

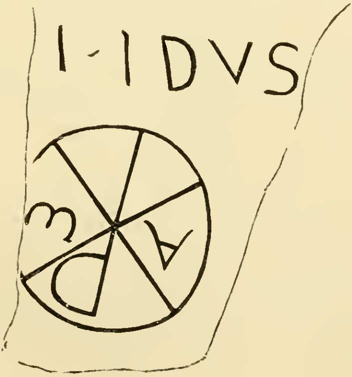
To return to the ancient symbols: the monogram of our Saviour's name, rudely expressed in the annexed fac-simile, (Lap. Gall.) is composed of χ and



ρ, the first letters of Χριστος. We preserve a vestige of this figure by writing Xmas, and Xtian, in which the first letter stands for the Greek *chi*. This inscription is to be read — Tasaris, in Christ the First and the Last.

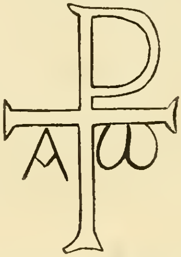
The alpha and omega, reversed in this epitaph, refer to the well-known passage in the Apocalypse: their continual use proves the general reception of that book as a part of the inspired canon.

The α and ω are mentioned by Tertullian, as well as by Prudentius. From the ignorance of the

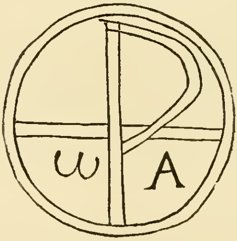


sculptor, the entire symbol was sometimes inverted, as in the above. The circle is supposed to imply the eternity of Christ. (Lap. Gall.)

A change was afterwards made by the *decussation* of the X, by which the figure of a cross was produced. Having arrived at this happy coincidence, the monogram remained stationary. Its simple outline, thus chiselled on a grave-stone,*

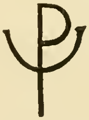


or accompanied by the misplaced letters*



or even converted into Psr, as if for Psristos,*

D · M · N

ELI

ASA

SORICIO.

To our great God. Eliasa to Soricius, in Christ, was, in course of time, ornamented with jewels; and the *monogramma gemmatum* took its place as a work of art among Christian bas-reliefs of the fourth century. The best specimen contained in the Lapidarian Gallery is here given: the jewels are only in marble, but they represent the real gems often lavished upon the ancient cross.

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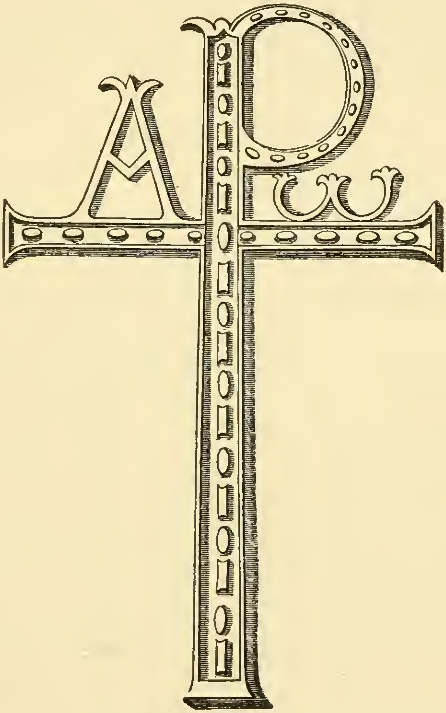
* Lap. Gall.



It has been said that the monogram was not invented before the time of Constantine, and was first seen in his miraculous vision. An epitaph, such as the subjoined, discovered by Bosio, may well be assigned to that time, when the motto "In hoc vinces" might have become common:

IN HOC VINCES

SINFONIA ET FILIIS
V · AN · XLVIII M · V · D IIII

In this thou shalt conquer — In Christ. Sinfonia, also for her sons — She lived forty-eight years, five months, and four days.

Or the next, from Oderici:

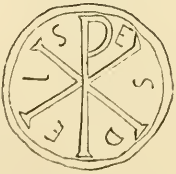
IN ☧ VICTRIX

which probably signified,

Victrix (a woman's name), victorious in Christ.

But the epitaphs of Alexander and Marius, martyrs under Adrian and Antonine, also exhibit the monogram: and though they do not appear to have been executed at the time, they contain marks of belonging to a period of violent persecution. The author does not possess any more decisive means of disproving the assertion made by Gaetano Marini, that the earliest monogram belongs to the year 331, that is, six years after the Council of Nice.

Boldetti found upon the plaster of a grave, the impression of a stamp an inch and a half in diameter:



Christus est Deus.

some zealous adherent to the true faith, probably in Arian times, had "set to his seal," that "Christ is God."

The only resemblance to the monogram used by the heathen, was the ceraunium ⚹ or symbol of lightning. The Egyptian cross appears to be an abbreviation of the Nilometer.

There is no authority for the statement that the monogram was a symbol of martyrdom, and signified "for Christ." In many inscriptions, we read *in* ☧; as

IN ☧ ASELVS D

Aselus sleeps (or, is buried,) in Christ. (Lap. Gall.)

Or,

SIGNV ☧

CELIX · ET CEREALIS · PATRI · BENEM ·
QVI · VIXIT · ANNIS · LXXXV · M · VIII · D · V
DORMIT IN PACEM.

The mark of Christ. Celix and Cerealis to their well-deserving father, &c.

Other symbols were employed to express the name of Christ: among these the most remarkable was the fish, which afforded a combination of every thing desirable in a tessera, or mystic sign. The Greek for fish, *ιχθυς*, contained the initials of Ιησους Χριστος Θεου Υιος Σωτηρ; Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour. Moreover, the phonetic sign of this word, the actual fish, was not intelligible to the uninitiated: an important point with those who were surrounded by foes ready to ridicule and blaspheme whatever signs of Christianity they could detect. Nor did the appropriateness of the symbol stop here. The fish, Tertullian thought, was a fit emblem of Him whose children are "born of water" in baptism.

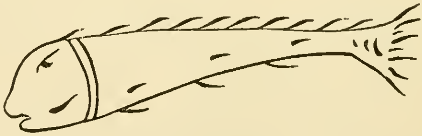
Sometimes the word *ιχθυς* was expressed at length, as in the two following: (Lap. Gall.)

IKΘYC
BONO ET INOCENTI FILIO
PASTORI · QV · X · A · N · IIII

NNIS · X
IXΘYC

The first contains the mistake of *ϰ* for *χ*.

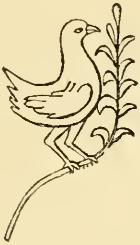
From an observation made by Clement of Alexandria early in the third century, it appears that the monogram was not then in general use: "Let our signets be a dove or a fish, or the heavenward sailing ship: the lyre employed by Polycrates, or the anchor engraved by Seleucus."* The Lapidarian Gallery contains specimens of nearly all these symbols; as the fish:



and the dove, already cited in the epitaph of Albana:

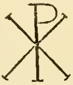
* Pædagogus, lib. iii.

The olive branch which it bears is borrowed from the history of Noah : it was sometimes carried in the claws of the bird, as in the accompanying, copied from the Vatican library.

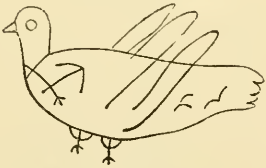


IENVARIE BIRGINI
BENEMERENTI IN
PACE BOTIS DEPOSITA

To Jenuaria, a virgin, well-deserving. Buried in peace, with good wishes.

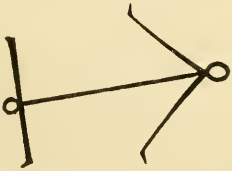


DECEMBER S EVIVO FECIT SIBI
BISOMVM.

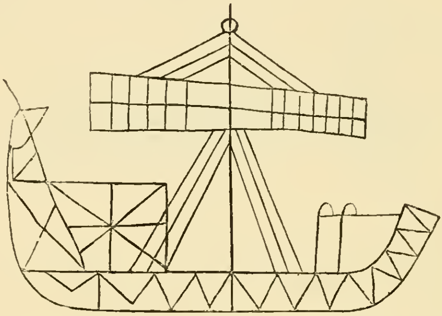


In Christ. December, while living, made himself a Bisomum. (Lap. Gall.)

Also the anchor, understood to signify the close of a well-spent life, the conclusion of a successful voyage, when the anchor is cast. (Lap. Gall.)



The Church was represented by a ship sailing heavenward, *ἡ ναυς ουρανοδρομοῦσα* of Clement; in later times steered by Peter and Paul. One of the figures is here copied: (Lap. Gall.)



This symbol may help to explain the words "so shall an entrance be ministered unto you abundantly:" generally referred to the prosperous entrance of a vessel into port. The ignorance displayed by the sculptor is scarcely to be accounted for, excepting by the circumstance, that the traffic on the Tiber was confined to barges, unprovided with masts and sails, and towed by horses.

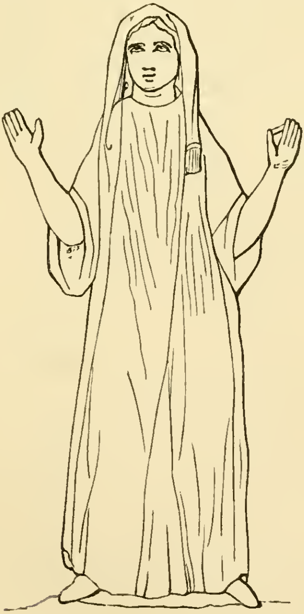
A number of sarcophagi exhibit at each corner the mask used by actors: this refers to an idea sometimes implied, but seldom expressed by the writers of ancient times. "All the world's a stage," is a sentiment likely to occur only to a nation well accustomed to the drama: though sometimes attributed to the prophet David, in the sentence translated, "Every man walketh in a vain show:" (or image, margin. ref.) Ps. 39. It is elegantly expressed in a Pagan inscription preserved by Gruter:

VIXI · DVM · VIXI · BENE · JAM · MEA
PERACTA · MOX · VESTRA · AGETVR
FABLVA · VALETE · ET · PLAVDITE.

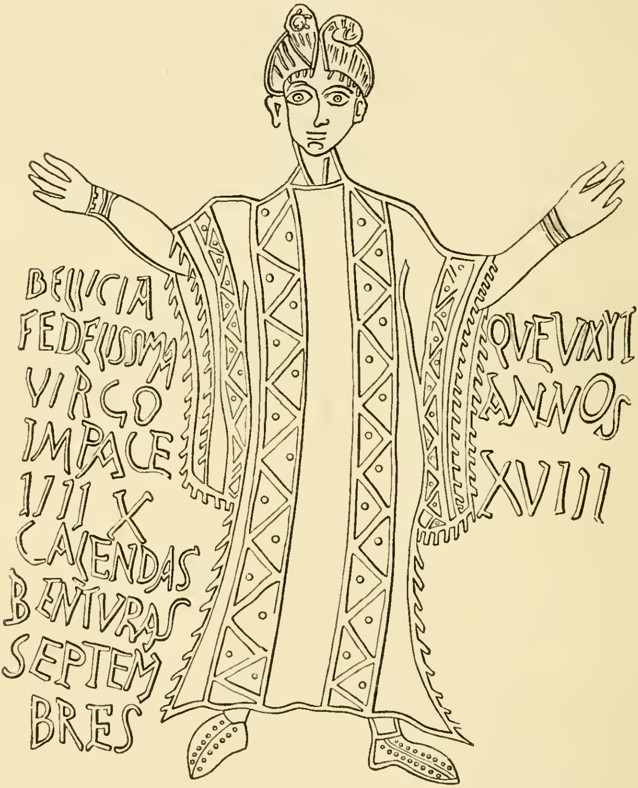
While I lived, I lived well. My drama is now ended, soon yours will be: farewell, and applaud me.

The peacock is said to have been used as an emblem of immortality. This idea was borrowed from the Pagans, who employed it to represent the apotheosis of an empress: for this purpose it was let fly from her funeral pile.

The supposed emblems of martyrdom, a figure praying, a crown, and a palm-branch, belong to this class. The praying figure sometimes occurs on sarcophagi of costly workmanship, as in the



accompanying instance*; also scratched with a chisel, and afterwards filled in with red, as in the specimen here copied from D'Agincourt, by whom



Bellicia, a most faithful virgin, who lived 18 years. In peace, on the 14th before the Kalends of September.

it was discovered. This carefully-finished production exhibits the dress of unmarried women at the time. Notwithstanding Tertullian's vehement treatise on the Veiling of Virgins, and the restrictions concerning their dress laid down by Cyprian, little attention seems to have been paid to either by the friends of Bellicia.

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* From the Vatican Library: the author not having permission to copy the bas-reliefs, availed himself of some drawings recently made by an Italian artist.

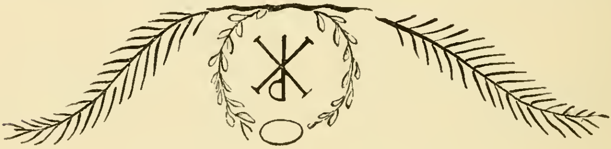
The dress consists of the *stola instita*, or fringed cloak, ornamented shoes, and an arrangement of the hair marking the times of the later Emperors. The posture is that described by Tertullian as proper to prayer: in this particular the Christians copied the Pagans, who prayed to the Dii superi (celestial gods) with their hands turned upwards: but addressed the infernal deities with the palms downwards. So Virgil represents his hero as praying with his hands stretched out to heaven: "Duplices tendens ad sidera palmas," a position which must have limited the length of their prayers. The praying figure is always of the same sex as the person buried beneath it.

Both the crown and palm-branch are borrowed from Paganism: but they received additional significance to the Christian from the mention made of them in the Apocalypse. On the strength of some expressions there used, antiquarians of the last three centuries have taken it for granted that the early Church employed both crown and palm, or either separately, as emblems of martyrdom. This supposition, though apparently reasonable, has been abandoned from want of proof: and such a fragment as the following is now supposed to belong to the epitaph of an ordinary Christian:

NA VIBAS
DOMINO
ESV

* * * * na, may you live in the Lord Jesus. (Lap. Gall.)

The crown and palm conjoined are also met with: in the following example, from the wall of the Vatican library, they encircle the monogram;

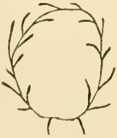


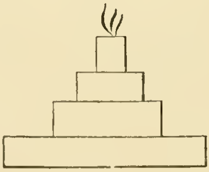
· FL · IOVINA · QVAE · VIX
· ANNIS · TRIBVS · D · XXX
· NEOFITA · IN PACE · XI · K

Flavia Jovina, who lived three years, and thirty days—a neophyte—in peace. (She died) the eleventh before the Kalends . . . . .

The extreme youth of the neophyte, while it proves the custom of infant baptism, makes the martyrdom of Jovina improbable.

The inscription to Horia, contained in some antiquarian works, exhibits an altar burning.





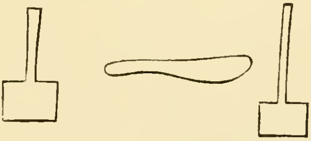
BENEMCPCNTI IN PACE
VIT XX MCSIS VI DIAE C XVIII
FELIX FCCIT HORIAE QVAE ANNOS.

This must be read from below upwards:

Felix made this to Horia, who lived 20 years, 6 months, and 18 days. To the well-deserving, in peace.

The symbols of trade figured upon grave-stones have been regarded by antiquarians as indicating the instruments by which the deceased had suffered martyrdom. Yet the entire absence of proof, added to the mass of horrors entailed upon history by the strange nature of the torments thus called into existence, might have staggered their credulity: and the combination of objects belonging to the same trade should have suggested a better explanation. The dates of some contradict the supposition, as in the epitaph of Constantia, copied from the walls of the Capitoline Museum:

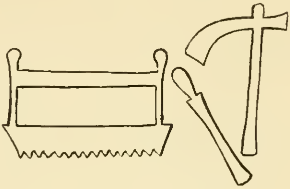
DEPOSITA COSTANTIA VI KAL IVLIAS ·
HONORIO AVG · V · CONSVLE DIE DOMINI
AQVAE VIXIT ANNOS P · M · SEXAGINTA
BENEMERENTI IN PACE.



Constantia, buried in peace, on the Lord's day, the 6th before the Kalends of July, in the 5th Consulate of Honorius Augustus, &c.

Honorius was Consul several times; his fifth consulate was in 402, long after the persecutions had ceased. The knife and mallets do not quite fix the trade: women might have been then employed in beating flax, as well as in combing wool. The inscription to Bauto and his wife (Lap. Gall.) is more decisive, the adze and saw being of the form now employed:

BAVTO ET MAXIMASI VIVI
FECERVNT



Bauto and Maxima made this during their lifetime.

The Pagans were also in the habit of using signs to indicate a trade or profession. There is a bag sculptured upon a stone on the right-hand wall of the Lapidarian Gallery, with the inscription —

VIATOR · AD · AERARIVM
Serjeant to the Exchequer.*

Raoul Rochette describes the monument of Atimetus, a *pullarius*, or poulterer, which exhibits a cage of chickens. The sphere and cylinder on the tomb of Archimedes, by which Cicero discovered the resting-place of the mathematician, furnish a well-known instance of the practice.

The tombstone of Adeodatus (Lap. Gall.) expresses tolerably well the implements of a wool-comber.

They consist of a pair of shears, a comb, and a plate of metal with a rounded handle. The spe-

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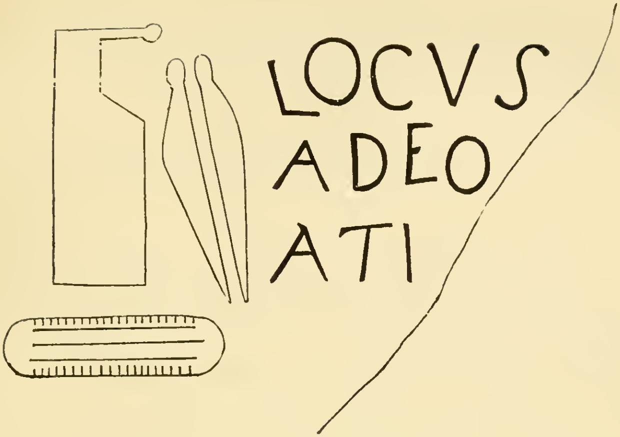
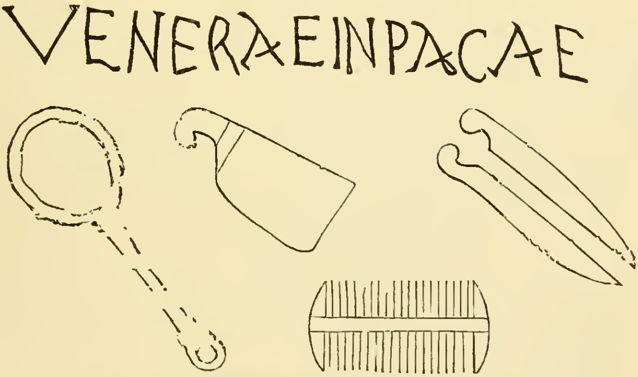
* Several epitaphs in Gruter contain the same title: also, " Viator questoris ad aerarium."



culum, generally used to indicate the trade, is here omitted, though inserted in the epitaph of Veneria.*



To Veneria. In peace.

The Lapidarian Gallery contains the epitaph of the wife of Marcianus, a shoemaker; the first line has been broken off or erased:

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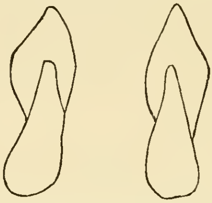
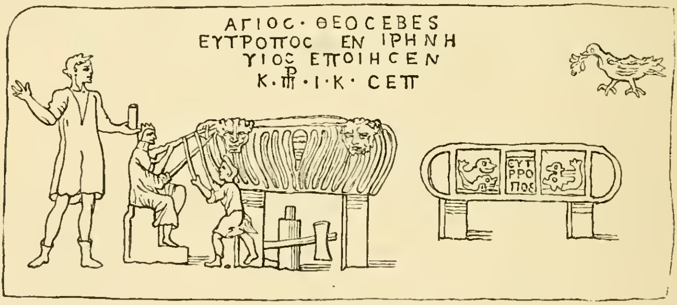
* The author found this inscription in the wall of a passage, No. 22. Piazza di Spagna, Rome.

ANIS XXVII MESES VI
DIES XI HORAS VIII MARCIANVS
COIVCI DICNISSEMF IN PACE



———(Aged) 27 years, six months, eleven days, and eight hours. Marcianus to his most worthy wife. In peace.

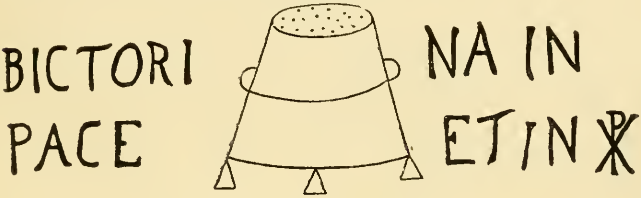
The picture of Diogenes, already explained, and that of Eutropus which follows, contain a number of implements relating to the occupation of the deceased:



The holy worshipper of God, Eutropus, in peace. His son made this. He died on the 10th Kalends of September. (Fabretti.)

The honours of a martyr have been conferred upon Eutropus, from the cup in his hand, and the praying position: but neither evidence is satisfactory. The process of drilling a hole in the sarcophagus is well expressed in the rude drawing; the instruments, masks of lions, and *strigiles* upon the sarcophagus, are given with some accuracy.

The following has found its way into Boldetti's great work, where the figure upon the stone is interpreted as a furnace used in the martyrdom of Victorina. It is here copied from the Lapidarian collection, in which it is preserved.

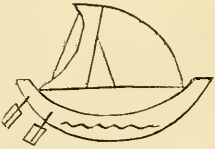


Victorina in peace and in Christ.

There can be now no question as to the true meaning of the figure;—an ancient bushel measure filled with corn.

Most of the remaining figures used by the Christians of ancient Rome were employed to distinguish the tomb of a friend or relation. The phonetic intention of these figures is expressed in the well-known epitaph of Navira:

NABIRA IN PACE ANIMA DVLCIS
QVI BIXIT ANOS n XVI M V
ANIMA MELEIEA
TITVLV FACTV
APARENTES SIGNVM NABE



Navira, in peace—a sweet soul, who lived sixteen years and five months—a soul sweet as honey: this epitaph was made by her parents—the sign, a ship.

The tomb of Dracontius exhibits a dragon: that of Onager, an ass.* The author has great pleasure in being able to add, to the small number of phonetics published, the annexed, from the Lapidarian Gallery:

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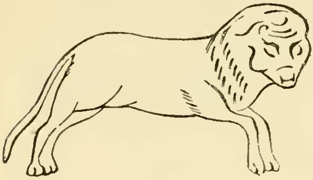
* Boldetti, Bottari, &c.

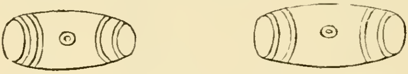
PONTIVS · LEO · S · EBIVO · FECIT · SIBI
ET · PONTIA · MAZA · COZVS · VZVS
FECERVNT · FILIO · SVO · APOLLINARI · BEN
MERENTI



Pontius Leo made this for himself while living. He and his wife Pontia Maxima made this for their well-deserving son, Apollinaris.

Two well-known instances are those of Doliens and Porcella: the first is not decisive, as the cask occasionally appears elsewhere:

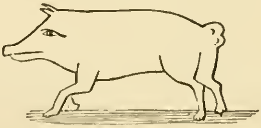
IVLIO FILIO PATER DOLIENS



—Doliens the father, to Julius his son—

Dolium is the Latin for cask; Porcella signifies a little pig, as in the next:

PORCELLA HIC DORMIT
IN P · QVIXIT ANN · III M · X
D · XIII



Here sleeps Porcella in peace. She lived three years, ten months, and thirteen days.

These animals would have considerably embarrassed the older writers: Leo, indeed, would have been a victim to the *lions* of the Coliseum; but the pig and cask, the ass and the dragon, must have puzzled all but Gallonius, whose love of the horrible would doubtless have invented unheard-of tortures to explain the symbols, and embodied them in engravings of fearful aspect.

Besides the signs employed by the orthodox, there were others, of Gnostic origin: some of these, by their glaring inconsistency with the pure spirit of Christianity, exemplify the doctrines condemned by the apostles, as introduced by depraved teachers.

If it be true that the ancient Christians, with the intention of disguising their religion from the Pagans, adapted to the new creed many of the symbols belonging to the old, — if, as asserted by Hope*, they sought out such signs as should seem Gentile to the Gentiles, though Christian to their fellow-believers, — they so far succeeded as to have deceived many antiquarians of later times. By being "all things to all men" in this respect, they have furnished an argument against the Christian character of their places of worship, dwellings, and sepulchres. "Diana's Stag," says Hope, "became the Christian soul thirsting for the living waters: Juno's Peacock, under the name of the Phœnix, that soul after the resurrection." It may be that disguise did not furnish the principal motive for choosing those equivocal emblems: perhaps more may be attributed to poverty of invention. This, however, is certain, that the symbols became more and more tangible,—more adapted to a gross conception, as Christianity became more established and secure from insult. The desecration of eucharistic vessels, attributed to Julian the Apostate, justifies the caution of the earlier believers in the concealment of their sacred rites.

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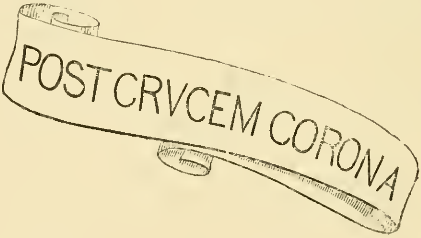
* Essay on Architecture.



CHAP. VI.

THE OFFICES AND CUSTOMS OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls.—Hebr. xiii. 17.

The highest office in the primitive Church of Rome was that of bishop—the episcopus, or papa. The last title, literally signifying Father, though since limited in its use, was originally applied to bishops in general. In the epistles addressed to Cyprian by the Roman clergy, the bishop of Carthage is styled "the blessed pope Cyprian." The form is preserved by our Church in the words "Most Reverend Father in God." Jerome applies the word Papa to the superior of a monastery, and several times to Augustine, bishop of Hippo. It occurs in one epitaph in the Lapidarian Gallery.

PERPETVAM SEDEM NVTRITOR POSSIDES IPSE
HIC MERITVS FINEM MAGNIS DEFVNCTE PERICLIS
HIC REQVIEM FELIX SVMIS COGENTIBUS ANNIS
HIC POSITVS PAPA SANTIMIOO VIXIT ANNIS LXX
DEPOSITVS DOMINO NOSTRO ARCADIO II ET FL
RVFINO
VVCCSS NONAS NOBEMB.

You, our nursing-father, occupy a perpetual seat, here deserving an end, having passed through great dangers. Here happy, you find rest, bowed down with years. Here lies the

> most holy Pope, who lived 70 years. Buried on the nones of November, our Lords Arcadius for the second time, and Flavius Rufinus, being Cousuls.

The date of this consulate is 392, in which year no bishop of Rome died. Siricius was made pope in 385, and lived to 396. Yet the reference to a perpetual *seat*, added to the title *papa sanctissimus*, strongly indicates episcopal rank. This *Papa* may have been an antipope, there being a schism at that time in Rome.

The body of St. Peter was buried in a crypt on the Vatican hill. This circumstance, which might be expected to give a special interest to that branch of the catacombs, has had the contrary effect; for, in the ceaseless attempts which have been made to decorate and modernize the cemetery, all trace of antiquity has been lost. According to Gregory the Great, the bodies of Peter and Paul were first hidden in the Sebastian catacombs, and afterwards removed to their present burial places; but the late date of this assertion (A. D. 600) destroys its credit.

The history of the ancient bishops of Rome is intimately connected with that of the catacombs, in which not a few were martyred, and all, till the middle of the fifth century, were buried. From the time of Leo I., who in 462 was interred in the vestibule of the sacristy of St. Peter's, we may date the decline of the subterranean cemeteries. During the troubles which followed, the knowledge of their entrances was lost, and only a few short passages of easy access remained open, which were still embellished with the ornaments suggested by a debased taste.

Who was the first bishop of Rome? Linus, answers the ancient church; St. Peter, the modern Romanist. From the entire historical evidence belonging to the period between A. D. 60, and 380, the reader will be able to judge how rapidly the primitive tradition on this subject was corrupted.

To begin with the earliest:

A. D. 66. St. Peter dates an epistle from Babylon, unanimously understood to be Rome by the ancient Church.*

A. D. 90. Clement, third bishop of Rome, only states that the Apostle suffered martyrdom.

A. D. 110. Papias. The usual quotation from this author is founded on a mistake.†

A. D. 180. Hegisippus, de excidio Judaico. A notorious forgery, allowed to be such by Bellarmine.

A. D. 180. Irenæus: nothing can be more conclusive than the testimony of this writer, whose intercourse with Polycarp, a disciple of St. John, gave him the best possible means of obtaining information. He says of Rome, "The blessed Apostles Peter and Paul having there founded a church, delivered the administration of its bishoprick to Linus, the same that is mentioned in Paul's epistle to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus; after him, in the third place from the Apostles, did Clement, who had seen and known them, obtain the episcopate." (Adv. Hæreses, lib. v.)

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* Asiatic Babylon was then in ruins, and the small village of the same name in Egypt has no claim to the honour. The identity of Babylon and Rome in this passage was first denied in the fifteenth century.

† The supposed quotation is by Eusebius, who says φασιν, *they say*, not referring to Papias and Clement: moreover, the observation (about the name Babylon) is not contained in Clement's Institutions.

A. D. 190. Tertullian, speaking of Rome: "where Peter was conformed to his Lord in suffering." (De Præscrip. Hæret. c. xxxvi.)

He twice calls Rome Babylon, and says in the Scorpiace, "Nero first persecuted us in Rome; then was Peter girded by another, when he was bound to the cross." Elsewhere he tells us that Clement received ordination from St. Peter.

A. D. 200. (about). The Apostolic Constitutions, a work notoriously spurious, though very ancient, tell us that St. Peter vanquished Simon Magus in Rome.

A. D. 230. Origen. The passage which Eusebius is generally supposed to quote from tom. 3. in Genesin, cannot be found there, nor in any other of Origen's extant works.

A. D. 252. Cyprian styles Rome the "chair of Peter."

A. D. 256. Firmilian, speaking of the bishop of Rome, expresses himself as "justly indignant at the manifest folly of Stephen, who, while he piques himself on the site of his see, and eagerly claims the succession of Peter, does introduce &c." (Cyp.

Epist. 75.) These African bishops were the first to attribute to St. Peter alone the foundation of the Roman see.

A. D. 290. Lactantius. "Peter and Paul preached in Rome—Nero put them to death." (Lib. iv. c. 21.)

A. D. 320. Eusebius. This accurate historian thrice assigns to Linus the post of honour as first bishop of Rome.

"After the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, Linus first received the bishopric of the Roman church." (H. E. iii. 2.)

"At that time Clement still presided over the church of Rome, being reckoned the third in succession from the Apostles among the bishops of that city. For the first was Linus, the second Anencletus." (C. 19.)

"The church being now founded and settled, the blessed Apostles delivered the bishopric to Linus." (Lib. v. c. 6.)

"Peter is said to have made mention of Mark in that epistle which he is supposed to have written from Rome, in which he is understood to have figuratively alluded to Rome in the words, 'The church which is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you, as also Marcus my son.'" (Lib. ii. c. 15.)

"Peter is supposed to have preached to the Jews who were scattered abroad throughout Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia. At last, coming to Rome, he was crucified with his head downwards, for so he had requested to be placed upon the cross." (Lib. iii. c. 1.)

A. D. 367. Damasus. His extant works are reckoned apocryphal by Bellarmine.

A. D. 370. Optatus, an African bishop, for the first time styles St. Peter "bishop of Rome." (Adversus Parmenianum, lib. ii.)

A. D. 374. Ambrose relates the crucifixion of St. Peter in Rome, but does not mention the position on the cross. (Oratio ad Auxentium.)

A. D. 380. Epiphanius. "There were in Rome first of all Peter and Paul, apostles as well as bishops: then Linus, next Cletus." (Hæresi 27.)

A. D. 390. Chrysostom and Prudentius repeat the history of St. Peter's crucifixion in Rome, together with the incident of his being inverted upon the cross.

From this time we hear no more of Linus as first bishop of Rome; but the statement of Optatus, notwithstanding its injustice to the memory of St. Paul, continues to be repeated with as much confidence as if it had been handed down from the earliest times.

The result of our examination may be thus summed up. The whole mass of ancient testimony, with a single exception, declares that the Apostles ordained Linus first bishop of Rome. The exception is an African fable, founded upon an equivocal expression of Cyprian, and worked into form by two other Africans: according to this fable St. Peter was first bishop of Rome. The Africans may be excused a mistake on the subject of the Roman see: enough for our purpose to know that the primitive church of Rome never pretended to claim St. Peter as its bishop.

We have now followed the fortunes of the Apostle to his instalment in the episcopal chair of Rome: this is but the first budding of his posthumous honours. In following his farther career, we find him in the year

400, bishop of Antioch, and afterwards, for twenty-five years, of Rome. (Jerome.)

484, he appoints the Pope his vicar. (Gelasius.)

600, is seven years bishop of Antioch, then of Alexandria, and, lastly, of Rome. (Gregory I.; thus making Antioch senior.)

860, travels from Jerusalem to Rome, touching incidentally at Antioch. (Simeon Metaphrastes; thus striking a blow at the seniority of Antioch.)

1083, succeeds Christ in the papacy of Rome. (Marianus Scotus, followed by M. Polonus, Platina, &c.*)

1560, his daughter Petronilla refuses the hand of Flaccus, a noble Roman. (Surius.)

1566, he founds the see of Rome before visiting

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* Mariani Scoti Chronicum.

"Romanorum Pontificum series:
1. Christus,
2. Petrus,
3. Linus," &c.

Bellarmine objects to the expression that the Pope is Christ's successor, as implying that Christ is no longer living. (De Summo Pont. cap. xxiv.)

Antioch, thus securing the Roman seniority. (Onu phrius Panvinus.)

1670, Petronilla is disowned, her youth reflecting upon the apostolic celibacy. (Baronius.)

1670, ends his episcopal career, having filled the chair of Rome during 24 years, 9 months, and 11 days. (Baronius.)

There is in the Roman calendar a festival, entitled " St. Peter's chair at Antioch," which has existed from the sixth century. There is also a feast of " St. Peter's chair in Rome," appointed by Paul IV., about the year 1550. The Antioch festival, which cannot now be expunged from the calendar, has deeply exercised the ingenuity of Romish writers. The seniority of Antioch was evident; Rome, as the younger sister, must forego her claim to the inheritance of the " regalia Petri." Gregory the Great, however, ventures to claim, on the part of Rome, an equality with Antioch and Alexandria; balancing the chronological precedence of those sees, by the fact that the Apostle remained in Rome till his death. " Although there are many apostles, yet, as regards the actual primacy, the seat of the first of the apostles alone claims precedence; and this, though of one person, is in three places. For he elevated that see in which he thought fit to remain stationary, and to finish his life. He graced that see in which he placed his disciple the Evangelist. He confirmed that see which he filled for seven years, though about to depart. Since then that see, over which by divine appointment three bishops now preside, is one and of one; whatever good I hear of you I take to myself, and, if you believe any good of me, set that down to your own account. For we are one in Him who said, 'that they all may be one.'"* This letter was written to Eulogius, bishop of Alexandria, in 597.

As Rome proceeded in her career, the chain that bound her up with Antioch and Alexandria became insupportably galling, threatening to hold her back from the spiritual government of Europe. An oracle had promised the empire of Asia to him who could untie the Gordian knot: Rome needed no other oracle than the prompting of her own ambition to set her upon seeking to sever these links. The first attempt to evade the difficulty was made by Simeon Metaphrastes, a writer of undoubted genius and fertile invention. He entirely remodelled the life of the Apostle, and arranged its incidents in a more judicious manner; interweaving some anticipatory remarks, so contrived as to throw the order of events into confusion. The Apostle is made to start for Rome in search of Simon Magus, a pursuit which leads him through Asia Minor, where, among other places, he twice visits Antioch. After accomplishing his mission in Rome he undertakes a fresh tour, consecrating many bishops, twenty-eight of whom are specified by name; but while residing in Britain, he is ordered to return to Rome, that his martyrdom may take place there. Baronius simply dismisses this statement as "imprudent."*

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* Gregorii Maximi, Epist. lib. vii. ep. 39. In this dexterously worded statement, Gregory begins St. Peter's career with his death, and goes backward to his first see. He also takes for granted these two points: that the Apostle *intended* to leave Antioch, (quamvis discessurus), and that he *intended* to die in Rome, (vitam finire dignatus est). The popes have never been fastidious in the choice of arguments in favour of their claims: thus Innocent the Third: "The Lord said to Peter, launch out into the deep, as if he would say, 'Go to Rome; take thyself and thine to the city, and there let down thy net for a draught.' Whence it plainly appears how much God loved that city." Innoc. III., sermo 2, in Petri et Pauli festo. Written about 1200.

A bolder champion of Rome's seniority was Onuphrius Panvinus, who endeavoured to prove the impossibility of St. Peter's having visited Antioch before going to Rome.† His arguments were refuted by Baronius and Ballarmine.

Rome's armoury was not yet exhausted: from the Vatican library was produced a manuscript, from which was printed an edition of Gregory's works: in this edition, by a bold anachronism of ten centuries, the ancient Antioch festival was metamorphosed into the festival of "St. Peter's chair *in Rome*." The fraud was discovered, though not till after its end had been answered: "I consider the passage false," observes the Benedictine annotator, "through the fault of the librarians."‡

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* Surius, Vitæ Sanctorum. Baronius, Annal. Eccles. tom. i.

† Additions to Platina, Vitæ Pontificum Romanorum.

‡ Locum, vitio librariorum, mendosum esse reor, cùm Roma pro Antiochiâ ponatur." Ed. Benedict. t. iii. p. 604

The Church which occupied the catacombs, as may be gathered from the universal voice of antiquity, not less than from the modest position assumed by Gregory in the sixth century, claimed no authority over distant Churches: and what is of equal importance, no such authority was ceded by them. So deeply does this question affect the character of the ancient church of Rome, that it can scarcely be evaded in a work treating expressly of the condition of that Church.

To the safety of the Papal theory several assumptions are necessary: that St. Peter was made head of the Apostles: that he should afterwards become bishop of Rome: that he was addressed as such when surnamed *Rock:* and that his power should be transmitted to his successors in one line only: all these are essential parts of the chain of argument. In so wide a range, we are saved from the temptation to deny any portion of the truth, while resisting the usurpation of the Italian primate. In no way does it weaken our cause to allow, (and may we never refuse due honour to one whom Christ has delighted to honour,) that the power of loosing and binding was conferred upon Peter some days or even weeks earlier than upon the eleven: that the commission to "strengthen his brethren" after his repentance, qualified him to administer the same reproof to the others, that he afterwards received from St. Paul: and we may safely grant, to those who delight in such interpretations, that when addressing the multitude from the boat of

Peter, Christ may have prefigured the future employment of its owner as first herald of the Gospel to the world at large. And among the twelve, we may attribute to "the first, Simon, who is also called Peter," all the preeminence that St. Paul could discover to belong to him when "James, Cephas, and John seemed to be pillars," without infringing the spirit of the declaration, "their great ones exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you." But when we have granted this, and have laboured in the cause of Rome as far as the most lax interpretation will permit, to what extent have we satisfied her claims?

To the declaration, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church," have been attached at various times different interpretations. For more than 300 years the words were uniformly understood in what must ever be considered their most natural sense, for as long as the Greek language was spoken, the difference of gender suggested by some modern commentators was not noticed: St. Peter and the Rock were therefore identified. Late in the fourth century another rendering was proposed: the rock was by many taken to signify the true faith. The question has ever since remained open, though the Romans have supported the interpretation which they imagine most favourable to their own pretensions. The Church of England has expressed no opinion on this point, simply inserting in the service for St. Peter's day the entire passage, containing the most stupendous announcement ever made to mortal man.

It is instructive to observe, how little the force of circumstances has influenced the interpretations attached to this passage. Cyprian, though engaged in controversy with the overbearing bishop of Rome, maintained the identity of Peter and the rock. Chrysostom and Gregory of Nyssa, in no way connected with Rome, started the counter-interpretation; and Leo the First, a pope of the fifth century, expounds the Petra as "the rock of catholic faith, the surname of which the apostle received." Augustine twice changed his mind upon the subject, at different times expounding it as the Lord, the church, and the apostle. Thomas Aquinas considered Christ to be the rock; and Jerome, allowing that Peter, though a married man, was called the rock, consoles himself with the reflection that Peter did not write the Apocalypse.*

During the fifth and sixth centuries the bishop of Rome possessed an extensive jurisdiction in Southern Italy: he was patriarch of 240 dioceses, and metropolitan of 110†; and was, moreover, universally respected, as the most influential prelate of the West. Unsatisfied with this, the successors of Gregory grasped at the forbidden fruit of supreme dominion; the fatal consequences of which were fully revealed in apostolic times: "She saith in her heart, I sit a queen: *therefore* shall her plagues come in one day."

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* See Cyprian's Epistles; Chrysostom's exposition of St. Matthew; Leo the First's Epistles; Gregory of Nyssa, De Adventu Domini;—Hieron. adv. Jovinian. lib. i.; Thomas Aquinas, in loco; Augustini Retractationes.

† Palmer on the Church, part vii. chap. 7.

The project of combining in a single individual the power of the whole apostolic college, did not originate in the Roman see, for John, archbishop of Constantinople about the end of the sixth century, first laid claim to the title of Œcumenical bishop. So little had the bishops of Rome then thought of pretending to that honour, that they only opposed the eastern usurper on the ground of his want of humility. After some correspondence on the subject, John died, and was succeeded by Cyriacus, who imitated the vanity of his predecessor, for, on the day of his nomination to the patriarchate, the congregation was persuaded to exclaim, "This is the day which the Lord hath made." On the news reaching Rome, Gregory congratulated the Constantinopolitans on the accession of their bishop, but mildly reproved them for the misapplication of a prophecy only referring to our Lord.

Cyriacus having made this beginning, was not backward to claim the title of universal bishop, a step to which Gregory objected, as likely to give general offence, and to cause schism; besides incurring the risk of a dangerous fall, since "he that exalteth himself shall be abased." The friends of Cyriacus complained of these expressions as harsh, and pressed the obnoxious claim; Gregory vainly entreating that it might be relinquished, "lest Antichrist, not far distant, should find any thing in the Church, if only in name." His exhortations still proving ineffectual, the Roman bishop refused to allow his deacon to communicate with Cyriacus; though he partook of the Eucharist with the messengers of Cyriacus, not wishing to involve any part of the Church in the offence of one man. His final protest deserves to be perpetuated: "I tell you confidently, that whoever styles himself, or wishes to be styled, universal priest, does in his self-exaltation anticipate Antichrist, because he sets up himself in pride above his fellows."*

The character of Gregory in this matter has been variously represented; some persons, unable to reconcile his truly episcopal conduct with the character of a pope of the sixth century, have not scrupled to charge him with the wish to secure for himself the contested title. History enables us to refute the charge, for on one occasion Eulogius of Alexandria addressed him by the title of universal bishop; Gregory answers in these words: "In the heading of your epistle, you have inserted a word of proud appellation, styling me universal pope. * * * When you call me universal pope, you deny the existence of that which confesses me universal. But no more of this: far from us be words that inflate pride and wound charity."*

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* "Ego autem fidenter dico quia quisque se universalem sacerdotem vocat, vel vocari desiderat, in elatione suâ Antichristum præcurrit, quia superbiendo se ceteris præponit."—Gregorii Maximi Epist. lib. vii. ep. vii. to xxxiii. It should be observed that Gregory does not say that the title was a mark of Antichrist, or that the "man of sin" would be a pretender to universal priesthood. Compare the inspired words, "Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

The extent of the Roman church during the reign of Decius may be gathered from a letter written by its bishop Cornelius, about 255. He charges the schismatic Novatus with not knowing "that there can be but one bishop in a catholic church. Yet he is not ignorant (for how can he be?) that we have forty-four presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolyths, and fifty-two exorcists, lectors, and door-keepers. The widows and infirm persons amount to more than fifteen hundred."† Perhaps the entire Christian community of Rome may have numbered at that time thirty or forty thousand persons.

The officers of the Christian church, in addition to the names by which they were usually known, were sometimes distinguished by titles derived from the Jewish ritual. The bishop was figuratively styled an angel, the presbyter a priest, and the deacon a Levite. So the *ostiarius* may be traced to the 84th Psalm, as "a door-keeper in the house of God." This custom received a certain sanction from the titles given to the Asiatic bishops in the Apocalypse, where an allusion is made to those who kept the holy scriptures in the synagogue, and who were called angels. This statement is made upon the authority of Lightfoot.*

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* Gregorii Max. Ep. lib. viii., ep. 30. Written in the year 598.

† Preserved by Eusebius, lib. vi. c. 42.

The apostolic and episcopal offices were, from the first appointment of bishops, kept distinct. It is against the spirit of the apostles' commission, to suppose them localised in any part of the church; they were directed to "go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature;" and upon this injunction they acted, journeying assiduously in every direction. The twelve shared among them the duties of *universal* episcopacy: a mode of government apparently not intended to continue after their death, and soon rendered impracticable by the increasing extent of the church. Accordingly we find their immediate successors settled in large cities and districts, with the authority and title of bishop: Mark in Alexandria, Titus in Crete, and Timothy at Ephesus. The few sees established by the apostles soon rose into archiepiscopal importance: even Crete, at first consigned to the care of Titus, is now divided into eleven or twelve bishoprics. But we seek in vain for the dioceses of James and John, Paul and Bartholomew, who, though they sometimes resided for years in the same city, recognised no geographical limits to their sphere of labour.

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* Harmony of the Gospels.

The custom of addressing letters to bishops, in preference to the churches over which they presided, was introduced thirty years earlier than the date of the Apocalypse. In the year 64, Ephesus being unprovided with a bishop, St. Paul continued his episcopal superintendence of the city, and addressed a letter to the church in general. Timothy was at that time living in Rome with St. Paul, as may be gathered from the Epistle to the Philippians. In the course of that year or the following, Timothy was sent to Ephesus with the authority of bishop, and from that time we have no more "epistles to the Ephesians," but two written to Timothy, as bishop of Ephesus. The most superficial examination of the epistles to Timothy and Titus will shew that the functions of those persons were not confined to the duties of a presbyter, but embraced the control over preachers and elders. The title of bishop was not strictly limited to the episcopal office till the second century.

Of the bishops of Rome late in the fourth century, and in the beginning of the fifth, there are some epitaphs contained in the Vatican library; being mostly votive tablets, they possess little historical interest. There are others published by Gruter, taken from the basilicæ of Sts. Peter and Paul. Gruter did not see those inscriptions himself, but copied them from a parchment MS. Among them is the following:

> Hunc mihi composuit tumulum Laurentia conjux,
> Moribus apta meis, semper veneranda, fidelis.

Invidia infelix tandem compressa quiescit,
Octaginta Leo transcendit episcopus annos.

My wife Laurentia made me this tomb; she was ever suited to my disposition, venerable and faithful. At length disappointed envy lies crushed: the bishop Leo survived his 80th year. (Gruter, p. 1173.)

The bishop was buried by his wife; but the epitaph was evidently composed, either by the bishop before her death, or by a third person. Who this Leo was, is not clear: Leo I. did not live more than 65 years. Putting together the circumstances of the epitaph and the history of Liberius, the author is inclined to conjecture that this bishop is none other than Liberius, bishop of Rome, who is called Leo in the following traditionary story. Leo was an Arian, and treated the Trinitarian Hilary with great contempt. "Do you know, rustic Gaul," he once asked of Hilary, "who I am? I am Leo, bishop of Rome." "I know that you are Leo," answered the other, "but not of the tribe of Judah." This story (if true) may be fixed upon Liberius, who was the only Arian bishop of Rome, and who was constantly opposed by Hilary. Leo I. was not bishop till a hundred years later.*

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* The history of Liberius requires explanation: having boldly confessed the orthodox faith, and suffered exile for some years, he afterwards signed the Arian creed: during three years and a half the church of Rome was outwardly Arian, through the force employed by Constantius. The accession of Jovian in 363 righted the Trinitarian cause. Liberius repented of his lapse.

The point of Hilary's answer seems to be this: Leo, if not of

Of presbyters very few epitaphs remain: Aringhi gives the following:

LOCVS BASILI PRESB ET FELICITATI EIVS
SIBI FECERVNT

The place of Basil the presbyter, and his Felicitas. They made it for themselves.

Aringhi was accused by Reinesius of having suppressed the word *wife* in this epitaph. Fabretti, in defence of the Roman antiquarian, observes, that there would be no advantage in suppressing the word, as Basil could style none other than his wife "his Felicitas."

The epitaph of a priest's daughter is also given by Aringhi (lib. iv. c. 29).

OLIM PRESBYTERI GABINI FILIA FELIX
HIC SVSANNA JACET IN PACE PATRI
SOCIATA.

Once the happy daughter of the presbyter Gabinus, here lies Susanna, joined with her father in peace.

The two following are from Boldetti:

ACATIVS PASTOR

LOCUS EXVPERANTI
DIACON

The place of Exuperantius the deacon.

Aringhi has preserved a remarkable inscription to the wife of a deacon:

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the tribe of Judah, must be the lion of the tribe of Dan, supposed to refer to Antichrist. Liberius, being an Arian, and thus "denying the Father and the Son," seemed to deserve this title.

LEVITAE CONIUNX PETRONIA FORMA PVDORIS
HIS MEA DEPONENS SEDIBVS OSSA LOCO
PARCITE VOS LACRIMIS DVLCES CVM CONIVGE NATAE
VIVENTEMQVE DEO CREDITE FLERE NEFAS
DP IN PACE III NON OCTOBRIS FESTO VC CONSS

Petronia, a deacon's wife, the type of modesty.—In this place I lay my bones; spare your tears, dear husband and daughters, and believe that it is forbidden to weep for one who lives in God. Buried in peace, on the 3rd before the Nones of October, in the consulate of Festus (*i. e.* in 472).

The Eastern consul is omitted: yet, from the carelessness of the sculptor, the abbreviation CONSS is left plural. VC also stands for vir consularis.

The next is from Gruter:

D · M ·
VALERIVS · QVI
VIXIT · IN · SAECVLO
ANN · XI · M · X · D · V ·
IANVARIVS · EXORCISTA
SIBI · ET · CONIVGI · FECIT ·

This is an instance of the appropriation of a heathen tombstone by a Christian. The latter half of the inscription tells us that "Januarius the exorcist made this for himself and his wife."

The exorcists are one of the orders not retained by the English Reformers. It appears to have been taken not from Apostolic, but from Jewish custom; we first read of "certain vagabond *Jews*, exorcists." There seems little reason for instituting a separate order of exorcists, as the power of casting out devils was among the miraculous signs that should "follow them that believe."

The epitaph of a lector, or reader, is given by Fabretti:

CLAVDIVS · ATTICIA
❦ NVS · LECTOR ❦
ET CLAVDIA
FELICISSIMA
COIVX

Claudius Atticianus a lector, and Claudia Felicissima, his wife.

The lectors were ordained very young, and promoted to other offices in course of time. They were a class somewhat resembling our choristers, and were employed to read the Scriptures aloud in the Church. Cyprian mentions making trial of the reading of Saturus on Easter-day, before his ordination. "Even our boy-lectors," says Augustine, "laugh at the ignorance of those, who imagine that Christ wrote epistles to Peter and Paul." Gruter gives the epitaph of one Atticus Proculus, aged 18. R. Rochette mentions one of 13, in France. The Lapidarian Gallery has an inscription to one of uncertain age:

LOCVS AVGVSTI
LECTORIS DEBELA
BRV
DEPSVRICA · XGKALγ
AVGγ
QVE VIXIT ANNOS
PMXIICONS
SEBERINI

This tablet contains two epitaphs: the first describes the grave as "the place of Augustus, lector in the Velabrum." These lines are composed of larger and ruder letters than the rest, and the A is replaced by Λ. Afterwards is added "Surica, buried on the fifteenth before the calends of August: she lived 12 years, more or less. In the consulate of Severinus" (that is, A. D. 461).

Another epitaph of a member of the clerical order, though of lower rank, is that of Terentius, in the Lapidarian Gallery:

TERENTIVS · FOSOR
PRIMITIVE · COIVGI
ET · SIVI .

Terentius the fossor, for Primitiva his wife, and himself.

The title fossor is here mis-spelt; it should have been as in the following fragment. (Lap. Gall.)

SFELIX FOSSOR
IXIT ANNIS LXIII
TVS XII KAL IANVARIAS

The fossor, Felix, lived 63 years; buried on the twelfth before the kalends of January.

The fossors, whose office has been already described, were also called Copiatæ, and Lecticarii. They are noticed in history from time to time, and their office was retained among the lower clerical grades till a late period.

During the first and second centuries, women were commissioned to instruct young persons of their own sex, under preparation for baptism. Of this class were probably Tryphena and Tryphosa. Pliny in his letter to Trajan, mentions having put to the torture, two deaconesses: this was in the year 110. The employment of female teachers, though extremely advantageous while paganism lasted, was discontinued as soon as Christian education became general in families. In churches, women were universally forbidden to take part in public teaching: an opposite custom seems to have prevailed in Corinth till the year 59, when it was prohibited by St. Paul.*

Private individuals were honoured with various titles expressive of their Christian profession; as, servant of God, friend of all men:

CVRRENTIO
SERVO DEI
DEP · DXVI
KAL · NOU ·

To Currentius, servant of God, buried on the 16th before the kalends of November. (Lap. Gall.)

MAXIMINVSQV
IVIXIT ANNOS XXIII
AMICVS OMNIVM

Maximinus, who lived 23 years; friend of all men. (Lap. Gall.)

This eulogy is sometimes found in Greek.

E KALAN NOENB. ☧
ΕΚΟΙΜΗΘΗ ΓΟΡΓΟΝΙC
ΠΑCΙΦΙΛΟC ΚΑΙ ΟΥΔΕΝΙ
ΕΧΘΡΟC

In Christ. On the 5th before the Kalends of November, slept Gorgonius, friend of all, and enemy of none.

The title "handmaid of God," used by Tertullian in opposition to "handmaid of the devil," occurs in the epitaph of Aurelia Agapetilla.

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* Compare 1 Cor. xi. 5. with 1 Cor. xiv. 34.

AVRELIA AGAPETILLA ANCILLA
DEI QVAE DORMIT IN PACE VIXIT ANN
XXI · M · III · DIIII · PATER FECIT

Aurelia Agapetilla, the handmaid of God: who sleeps in peace. She lived twenty-one years, three months, and four days. Her father set up this.

Among Christian women of the third and fourth centuries, widows and virgins formed separate bodies, subject to different laws. These appellations, however, were strictly applied only to persons who had voluntarily fixed upon celibacy or widowhood; and not to such as left themselves at liberty to change their condition. A few of their epitaphs remain:

FVRIA HELPIS
VIRGO DEVOTA

Furia Elpis, a consecrated virgin.

AESTONIA VIRGO PEREGRI
NA QVE VIXIT ANIS XL · I · ET · DS ·
VIII · IIII · KAL · MAR · DECESSIT
DE CORPORE

In Christ. Aestonia, a travelling virgin, who lived forty-one years and eight days. She departed from the body on the 4th before the Kalends of March. (Lap. Gall.)

The term *peregrinus* was applied to such persons as were received by distant Churches while journeying. This mode of admitting them to communion did not amount to an absolute recognition of their orthodoxy, and consequently could not be abused by heretics.

The order of widows strictly so called, was either instituted or confirmed by St. Paul, who admitted none under the age of sixty. He required them to have been but once married, and to be "well reported of for good works." The epitaph of one of this order is cemented into the wall of the Vatican library.

OC·TA·VI·AE · MA·TRO·NAE
VI·DV·AE · DE·I

To the matron Octavia, a widow: of God.

Very few epitaphs of persons devoted to celibacy are to be found in the Lapidarian gallery, the monastic spirit having made slower progress in Rome than in the East. It was not till late in the fourth century, when the romantic exploits of Athanasius had become the theme of general admiration, that a taste for deserts and solitary adventures was first infused into the inhabitants of the western metropolis. "At that time," remarks Jerome, "none of the noble women in Rome knew anything about monasticism; nor did they venture, on account of the novelty of the thing, to assume a name then reckoned base and ignominious."* From the year 360 we may date the introduction of monasticism into Rome: the few who first embraced it found a plausible excuse in the interruptions to which their devotions were liable, from the metropolitan habits of visiting and dissipation.

The monuments described in this chapter, selected from the mass of remains either published or exhibited in the Vatican, illustrate two subjects: the existence of a regular clergy, filling a variety of offices, of all ages, married and single; and the introduction of an aristocracy of female virtue, professing to rise above the *profanum vulgus* of married life. In itself, there is perhaps nothing more calculated to raise our estimation of the ancient Church than the fact, that thousands of persons were found ready to devote themselves to the service of God in singleness of life and voluntary poverty. Too earnest in seeking the kingdom of heaven, to allow the comforts of domestic life to impede their progress, they seem to stand by themselves, a mighty monument of piety: something to be looked up to, to be honoured; more easily admired than imitated. These persons were boasted of by the Church of the fourth century, as her jewels, her peculiar treasure:

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* Epistle 96. Epitaphium Marcellæ.

Cernis sacratas virgines,
Miraris intactas anus
Primique post damnum thori
Ignis secundi nescias.
Hoc est monile Ecclesiæ!
His illa gemmis comitur!
Dotata sic Christo placet!
Sic ornat altum verticem.*

She compared her thousands of virgins with the half-dozen vestals, the only parallel which paganism could display.† But, unfortunately, the great patrons of this system, the Fathers themselves, reluctantly display it in another light. On this subject it is difficult to hold any middle opinion: we may look to the brighter side alone, and admire; but if we once inquire into the practical working of the institution, "to be once in doubt, is — once to be resolved." Open Chrysostom, Jerome, or Basil, and the halo fades from the brow of ecclesiastical celibacy: like the soil of a decayed sepulchre, it bears some fair flowers, but not enough to conceal the remains that nourish their unnatural bloom.

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* Prudentius, Peristephanon. Hymn 3.

† Prud. cont. Symmachum, lib. 2.

Whatever purity of intention belonged to the earliest votaries of monasticism, it is to be feared that the end proposed by the monks and nuns of later times, was to purchase, by its means, the highest rewards that Heaven could bestow. To be saved by the blood of Christ was humbling, when salvation could be bought by a species of self-sacrifice. A new passport to eternal glory, and one which conferred upon its possessor great earthly honour, was the premium upon a single life. In examining into the merits of this system, we must distinguish between the forced celibacy of the clergy, and the voluntary self-dedication of lay persons to the service of God. The one is almost forbidden by St. Paul ("Let the bishop be the husband of one wife"); the other receives a certain amount of encouragement: "There is this difference between a wife and a virgin; the unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." As long, then, as the time and means redeemed from secular matters were suitably employed in the service of the Lord, the pious devotee came under the sanction of the apostolic declaration. Still farther, the Apostle, when speaking not from inspiration, but from his own judgment, encouraged the practice of deferring the nuptials of betrothed persons: "he that giveth her not in marriage, doeth better." And this direction was given, not in time of distress, as our translators have rendered *αναγκη*, but when the Corinthian Christians were living in security, eating in idols' temples, and appealing to heathen judges as arbiters of their dissensions.

For the first two hundred years we hear almost nothing of the profession of celibacy. Probably women, rather than men, availed themselves of the leisure thus obtained: their intentions were fulfilled without scandal to the Church, and remained with themselves, as a matter between God and their own souls. Whether the honour afterwards paid to these persons induced others, not possessing the requisite qualifications, to follow their example, or whether the notion of absolute merit attached to a single life was an error too serious to be indulged with impunity, the institution of celibacy, once reduced to a distinct form, degenerated beyond all hope of recovery. The first serious blow to its character was given by the nuns of Carthage, in the middle of the third century: their manners disgraced the community, and reflected discredit on the whole African Church. To reform this disorderly body was the difficult task of Cyprian, who spared neither threats nor entreaties to bring them to a sense of their short comings. With the loftiness of their calling, exaggerated, it must be confessed, by the application of some irrelevant passages of Scripture, he contrasts their inordinate love of paint and jewellery, habit of frequenting the public baths, and general anxiety to render attractive to the world the persons devoted to Heaven: "You presumptuously dye your hair, and with an ill omen to your future condition, labour to make it flame coloured. * * * If you lay a bait for catching others,—if you put in their way occasions of sin,—however sober your professions, your mind is polluted, and you cannot be accounted guiltless." *

A distinct parallel may be traced between the merit attributed to celibacy at different periods, and the mischief practically resulting from it. For two centuries it was neither magnified into a virtue, nor did it become a cloak for vice; in the third, it occupies a doubtful position; in the fourth and fifth, the deplorable state of its votaries keeps pace with the dangerous language uttered in its praise.

"It were endless," says Jerome, "to expound the parable of the ten virgins, five wise, and five foolish: this only will I say, that whereas without other good works, virginity alone does not save (vir-

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* For an exposure of greater enormities enacted by the nuns, may be consulted the Epistle to Pomponius.

ginitas sola non salvat), so all good works, without virginity, purity, continence, and chastity, are imperfect."*

"What others will hereafter be in heaven, that virgins begin to be on earth. * * * Peter was an apostle, John an apostle; one married, the other single: but Peter was only an apostle; John, an apostle, evangelist, and prophet. * * * For this reason John, the single, expounds what the married could not: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' * * * For this reason Christ consigns to John's charge the Virgin mother (a Domino virgine, mater virgo virgini discipulo commendatur)."

With such opinions to influence the laity, it cannot surprise us to find this royal road to heaven crowded with pilgrims, who found their account partly in the honour paid to them in this world, and partly, as they fondly hoped, in the privileges ensured to them in the next. Perhaps no tenet mixed up with Christianity has more tended to obscure the doctrine of the Cross than that of celibacy: the gospel, preached to the poor, the profligate, and the married, scarcely finds its way into the patristic addresses to more exalted professors of sanctity. These had passed the broad line between the sinner and the saint, and while living inherited the honours of their predecessors, the martyrs and confessors of a former age. That illustrious body, extinct with the spirit of persecution necessary to its continuance, left a blank in the church of the fourth century, only to be filled by some new order of spiritual knighthood. Celibacy supplied the vacancy; and despite the difference between the two methods of self-sacrifice, their glory was equal, and the rank conferred by both, in a remarkable degree identical. Of this a proof is found in the successive explanations of the parable of the sower, which was pushed beyond the meaning attached to it by our Saviour, and made to register degrees of virtue upon an artificial scale. The hundred-bearing seed, no longer merely representing the obedient hearer of the word, personified the fervid aspirant to martyrdom or celibacy, whose zeal had reached the boiling-point in pursuit of heavenly honour. The sixty-fold produce was that of the less ardent; the thirty-fold included the temperate, perhaps the luke-warm, professor. While persecution lasted, martyrdom occupied the highest place on the scale: "The first or hundred-fold," says Cyprian to the nuns of Carthage, "is the increase of martyrs: the second, sixty-fold, is yours."* After the time of Julian, some alteration was necessary, in order to preserve the highest order of sanctity in the Church: the bold invention of Jerome supplied the want. "The thirty-fold," he decided, "refers to marriage; the sixty-fold, to widowhood; but the hundred-fold expresses the crown of virginity." *

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* Jerome, Adv. Jovinianum, lib. i.

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* De habitu virginum, c. 11. The accumulated fruitfulness of virgin-martyrs thus exceeded the gospel maximum: "In them the hundred-fold is added to the fruit of sixty-fold."—Cyp. Ep. 76.

But we are not yet entitled to disallow the merits of ecclesiastical celibacy, having hitherto only examined one side of it. We have, indeed, seen Scripture misapplied on its behalf, the doctrine of the Atonement obscured, and the Church scandalised by the ruin of some unworthy aspirants to its honours; but we have not yet glanced at the many who profited by it: in the state of those whom it raised to the highest pinnacle of the temple, we must look for a set-off to these inconveniences. It is true, some may argue, mischief was done to individuals: there was much meaning in Jerome's caution — "It were better to have walked in lowly paths — to have submitted to marriage, than, attempting a higher ascent, to fall into the depths of hell." † But if the introduction of a new and more exalted mode of holiness has proved fatal to some, whose faith was unequal to the trial, what blame shall their failure cast upon the inventor? — A millstone and the depths of the sea are declared to be preferable to the portion of him who offends the little ones.

Let us scrutinise a little the character of those favoured ones, at the shrine of whose perfection the souls and bodies of their fellow Christians were offered; then shall we judge better how far their gain was worth the sacrifice. Of all the

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* Ad Ageruchiam.

† Ad Eustochium.

Fathers none can be found more strongly devoted to celibacy than Jerome: "I love to praise marriage," he exclaims in one of his milder moments, "because it supplies us with virgins; of those thorns we gather roses." It will therefore be doing no injustice to the system, if we take as tolerably accurate his description of its votaries. Let us hear him, in the confidence of friendship, setting forth their characters:

"Their weak point is the love of praise: there are very few free from this. * * * Some of them, women, go about disfigured, that they may appear to men to fast: when they see any one approaching, they begin to sigh and look down; then they cover the face, leaving only a peep hole for one eye: their clothes indeed are ragged, their girdle is of sackcloth, their hands and feet are dirty." Still, in spite of these promising appearances, their religion is but skin-deep, "for within, where man sees not, they are surfeited with food."

"Some exchange their dresses for male attire, blush to be the women they were born, cut off their locks, and impudently greet you with an equivocal stare." *

"As for the men," he cautions Eustochium, "when you see any with hair like women, beards like goats, a black cloak, and feet exposed to the cold, — avoid them: all these things are marks of

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* The cutting off the hair of nuns was for some centuries forbidden by the councils; the apostolic precept being still observed.

the devil. Of that description were Antimus and Sophronius, who entered noble houses, and there deceived silly women laden with sins," &c. * * * "Others there are, who have entered orders with the view of enjoying more at their ease female society. Their only care is dress, perfume, and the neatness of their feet: their hair waves from the impression of the curling-iron; their fingers sparkle with rings; for fear of contracting mud, they step on tiptoe: if you saw them, you would take them for bridegrooms, rather than priests."

"But there is one," pursues Jerome, warming with his subject, "there is one, a proficient in his art, whom I must sketch, that knowing the master, you may recognise the scholars. He rises early, and hastens to his work; visits people scarcely awake, and intrudes himself almost into their chambers. If he sees a cushion, a handsome table-cover, or other piece of furniture, he approves it; is struck by it, handles it, and laments that he does not possess such a thing himself; and so rather extorts than fairly obtains it, for the women all fear to offend the great man of the city." *

We derive no better impression of the nuns from the works of Chrysostom.† Forbidden, as he tells

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* Ep. ad Eustochium. Jerome was surprised to find that this letter, which was handed about very generally, gave great offence. "Every body," he complains, "took it as a personal attack, instead of a general lesson of morality." Ep. ad Demetriadem.

† Especially from the tract entitled, "Quod regulares feminæ viris cohabitare non debent."

us, to imitate the zeal of Phineas, to snatch up a sword and to execute summary vengeance, he takes refuge in sighs and tears. For his attack upon the nuns, which is not fitted for quotation, he excuses himself on two grounds: that they injured their character more deeply by their own conversation, and that the world spoke worse things of them than he had done.

But what impression does the earnest and uncompromising Jerome convey, of his best specimens of the class? His letters to some of those women remain: a fearful monument of the social effects of the system. Amidst minute, and far from spiritual, interpretations of Solomon's Song, — amidst fulsome eulogies of the nuns, and dissertations upon their peculiar relationship to the Bridegroom, — the religion and the Christ of the New Testament seem missing: the Lord of life is departed; the grave-clothes alone remain to show the place where He lay.

To the enormous evils arising from celibacy the Church applied two partial remedies: virgins who could not maintain their profession with credit were sometimes recommended to marry: and none were allowed to take a vow of celibacy under the age of forty. For a long time the marriages of monks and nuns were reckoned valid, though censured as a departure from first professions: the council of Trent declared them null and void.

Single women, under the title of *subintroductæ*, were at times permitted to live in the houses of unmarried priests. The councils very early interfered with this custom, and generally limited the permission to a daughter, aunt, or sister. The daughter was omitted in course of time, as celibacy previous to ordination became binding. "I observe with grief of heart," says Cyprian, "that this unlawful and dangerous intercourse has corrupted the purity of numbers." * So Jerome: "Whence arose the pest of the Agapetæ?" † — a name given to them in conformity with the expression of St. Paul, Περσις ἡ αγαπητη, "the beloved Persis."

The rules laid down for the observance of those who professed celibacy were extremely strict: "I desire," says Jerome to Rusticus, "that you will not live in your mother's house, chiefly, lest when she offers you delicate food, you should grieve her by refusal; or by receiving it, should add oil to the flame. * * * Let your hands and eyes be never without a book. Learn the Psalter word for word. Pray incessantly. * * * Undertake some labour, that the devil may always find you occupied."

His directions to Eustochium are of the same description: "Seldom appear in public, but supplicate the Martyrs in your own chamber. You will always find an excuse for going out, if you allow any excuses whatever. * * * Let sleep surprise you, book in hand; and let the sacred page support your nodding head."

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* Ep. ad Pomponium, cap. 1.

† Ad Eustochium, cap. 5.

In the Apostolic age, marriage combined with the orderly government of a family appears to have been reckoned rather a qualification for the ministry than otherwise, a pledge that the candidate for orders was not deficient in those domestic and social virtues that befit a bishop and a priest. "A bishop," enjoins St. Paul, "must be blameless, the husband of one wife. * * * Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife."

Early in the third century there arose an obscure sect that depreciated marriage. On this subject Eusebius makes the following remark: "For the conviction of some who reprobated marriage, Clement of Alexandria enumerated those of the Apostles who are known to have lived in wedlock, saying, 'Will they condemn the Apostles?' For Peter and Philip were both fathers of families, and Philip gave his daughters in marriage." *

The practice of after times gradually changed. The Council of Neocesarea, A.D. 314, ordained that a presbyter marrying after ordination should be deposed: he was also forbidden to marry a second time, though his having a wife did not prevent him from entering the ministry. The Council of Nice, held in 325, was not far from imposing celibacy on the clergy. Paphnutius, an old Egyptian bishop, resisted the proposed decree, and delivered the first ecumenical council from the stigma of

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* Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 30.

having enforced this innovation.* The Council of Elvira forbad all orders of the priesthood to marry: at the same time it allowed the clergy to maintain in their houses a sister, or dedicated virgin daughter: whether daughter of the Church, or of the priest himself, is not clear.

The decrees of councils on this point would fill a volume: it will be sufficient to quote the Quinisextan canon, A. D. 706, to show how slowly forced celibacy invaded Christendom: "If any presbyter or deacon put away his wife, under pretence of piety, let him be excommunicated: if he persevere, be deposed." This canon refers to a detestable custom of abandoning wives and families on taking orders.

Even monks were not originally always devoted to a single life. It was remarked by Augustine, early in the fifth century, that "the catholic Church has very many, both of her monks and her clergy, that are married."† This observation was directed against a sect, who called themselves apostolic, and decried marriage.

Among the most remarkable customs observed in the primitive Church was the Agape, or love-feast, a truly catholic element of ancient Christianity. Begun in the purest spirit, it shared the fate of some other ordinances, till in the fifth century it became a scandal to all Christendom. It is first mentioned by St. Jude, in the passage, "These are spots in your agapæ," εν ταις αγαπαις ὑμων, translated in our version, "feasts of charity." The feast, as held in the catacombs, is represented in a picture found in a subterranean chapel, in the cemetery of Marcellinus and Peter. (Aringhi.)

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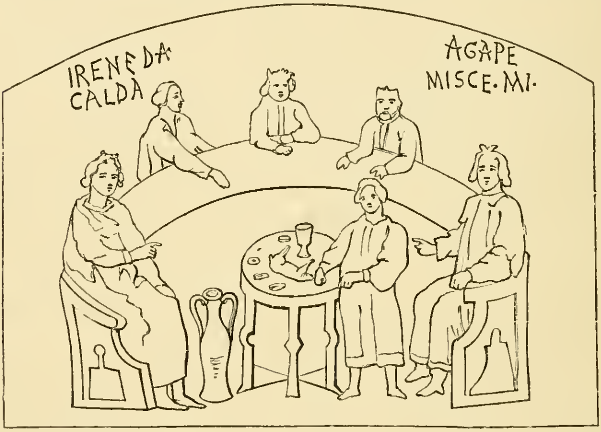
* The reporter of the council betrays a grateful feeling towards the aged confessor. "The divine Paphnutius said with a great voice, 'Make not the yoke of the clergy more heavy: marriage is honourable in all.'" Harduin. Concil. Nicæn. I.

† De Hæresibus, c. 40.



In this painting three guests are seen seated, and a page supplies them with food from the small round table in front, supporting a lamb and a cup. The two matrons who preside, personifying Peace and Love, have their names written above their heads, according to the Etruscan practice.

The inscriptions should be read: Irene, da calda(m aquam); and, Agape, misce mi (vinum cum aquâ). "Peace, give hot water; Love, mix me wine." The custom of mixing water with wine was almost universal among the ancients: sometimes the water was iced, sometimes warm, and occasionally of the natural temperature:

> "Caldam poscis aquam, sed nondum frigida venit."

"You ask for hot water, but the cold has not yet come," says Martial: and again,

> "Frigida non desit, non deerit calda petenti."

"Here let there be cold water, the hot will not be wanting when called for."

The table furnished with provisions was named *cibilla*, from *cibus*, food.

In a city rich as imperial Rome in historical associations, where the very stones are piled in chronological succession, among triumphal arches and trophies, among the ruins of temples and palaces, can the miserable painting of a subterranean cell offer any thing worthy the attention of the traveller? Let us try.

In a dismal cavern, accessible only to the well-provided explorer, among tombs and vaulted chambers, where every thing bears marks of high antiquity, is found a rudely-designed picture, attributed by the most skilful connoisseurs to the third or fourth century; and this on excellent grounds: its style marks the decline of art soon after the time of the Antonines: its subject is connected with a religion not brought to Rome before the reign of Claudius, and which did not employ painting till the third century. The ceremony it represents was almost universally discontinued in the fifth, and the pictorial details closely correspond with the descriptions left by the poets of the Augustan age. The design, carefully finished in its parts, and every where abounding in information, is generally wrong in perspective; in short, nothing is wanting to prove its authenticity to any one conversant with ancient art of an inferior class.

These facts are established by the picture: that in the third or fourth century, certain persons, either from choice or from necessity, selected caves in the neighbourhood of Rome, and devoted much attention to embellishing them. One of the subjects there painted was a solemn feast, at which Peace and Love were supposed to preside. This is so often repeated in sculptures and paintings, that the ceremony must have been common, and not very recently established. Who are these peaceful refugees, apparently too gentle for the iron times of Decius and Diocletian? To what system of philosophy belong those magic words, Irene and Agape, altogether strange to heathenism, and indicating by their Greek form an Eastern origin? But one answer can be given to these questions. The most obstinate sceptic must confess that the ancient church in Rome, pacific and defenceless as it here appears, did conquer the proud array of Pagan and Imperial power: and the Christian, forced to admit a Divine interposition in behalf of his religion, beholds a testimony from Heaven to its truth.

The Agape, at first held as a part of regular religious worship, was in course of time reserved for marriages and deaths. At length the anniversaries of martyrdom became the chief occasion of its celebration. These days were called *natalitia*, or birthdays, because the saints were then " born to heaven from the world." As long as persecution was likely to befall the Church, there was policy in commemorating annually the triumphs of her heroes. To meet by lamplight over the grave of a departed friend, and there to animate each other's faith by mutual exhortations; to partake together of the funereal meal before the tablet which inclosed his bones; in all this the faithful of that age found a constant stimulus to fortitude and zeal. But the natalitia celebrated after Constantine tended in a lamentable degree to secularise religious worship: the festival was thrown open in the hope of obtaining converts; and many of the Pagan poor, after having been fed at the expense of the Church, became suddenly convinced of the truth of Christianity.

The Agape was still further desecrated by a less justifiable measure—an attempt to replace the Pagan festivals by corresponding Christian solemnities. Augustine gives this account of the matter; "When peace was made, the crowd of Gentiles who were anxious to embrace Christianity were deterred by this, that whereas they had been accustomed to pass the holidays in drunkenness and feasting before their idols, they could not easily consent to forego these most pernicious, yet ancient pleasures. It seemed good then to our leaders to favour this part of their weakness, and for those festivals which they relinquish, to substitute others, in honour of the holy martyrs, which they might celebrate with similar luxury, though not with the same impiety."*

To form a just idea of a ceremony so changed in character from age to age, we must consult the writers of each period in succession. St. Paul and St. Jude have spoken for the nature of the Agape in the first century; Tertullian, while still orthodox, describes it in the second: "Our supper by its name displays its character: its name is the Greek for *love.* * * * We so eat as having to worship God by night: we so talk, as knowing that the Lord hears. After washing our hands, and bringing lights, each is called upon to sing to God according to his power, either from Holy Scripture, or from his own composition. Prayer also concludes the feast."†

The same Tertullian, when prejudiced by Montanism, deemed the Agape too carnal to be reckoned among the bonds of Christian fellowship: "Your love boils — in the kettle; your faith glows — in the kitchen; your hope is — in the dish."‡ It is strange that one who had so nobly defended the purity of the Agape against heathen calumnies, should turn round upon it so bitterly. Perhaps his accusations were, at the time, unfounded; but in the end of the fourth century, they would have fallen short of the truth.

The Council of Elvira prudently forbad women to pass the night in cemeteries.* At Cæsarea, dances were held round the tomb of the martyr†: this was an acknowledged abuse, and confined to that city. The Pagans, with some reason, supposed that the feast was instituted to appease the manes of the dead. But at this time, Rome discontinued a custom so grossly perverted. The fathers did their utmost to suppress the abuses, if not the feast itself. We have already heard Chrysostom reproving the Constantinopolitans, by reminding them of the perils of a persecuted church. Augustine did not spare the Africans: "The martyrs hear your bottles, the martyrs hear your frying-pans, the martyrs hear your drunken revels." The council of Laodicea condemned it altogether. Yet the custom lingered till 706, when the Quinisextan divines suppressed it entirely. "It is unlawful," they decreed, "to hold Agapæ, that is to say, feasts of charity, in the Lord's house, or in a church: also to eat within the building, and to place couches."

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* Epist. xxix.

† Apologeticus, cap. 39.

‡ De Jejun. c. 17.

So popular did religious feasts become with the lower orders, that all bounds were transgressed in multiplying them: "These revels, and this drunkenness, are now thought so allowable," complained Augustine, "as to be celebrated in honour of the blessed martyrs, not only on festivals, which is bad enough to all who do not look with eyes of flesh, but every day."‡ Such irregularities deeply grieved the pious and amiable Paulinus, bishop of Nola, who painted Scripture subjects over the whole of his church, to edify the ignorant people who came together for the Agape of St. Felix. They greatly needed some interference of the authorities, for their bishop laments that these festivities were carried on through the entire night. "How I wish," he continues, "that their joys would assume a more sober character; that they would not mix their cups on holy ground. Yet I think we must not be too severe upon the pleasures of their little feasts; for error creeps into unlearned minds; and their simplicity, unconscious of the great fault they commit, verges on piety, supposing that the Saints are gratified by the wine poured on their tombs."[*]

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* Placuit prohiberi, ne feminæ in cemeteriis pervigilent, eo quod sæpè sub obtentu orationis, latenter scelera committant.

† Basil, appendix, sermon 19. ‡ Epistle 64. alias 22.

The number of causes contributing to make the Agape what it was at different times, is remarkable. Beginning as an apostolic feast, perhaps held in imitation of our Saviour's last meal with his disciples (at least that part of it distinct from the sacramental institution), it was afterwards interwoven with the *silicernium*, feast of Hecate, or *cœna novemdialis* of the ancients, a funeral feast held nine days after a death.[†] Then the attempt to convert the pagan poor by feeding them, and the substitution of martyr festivals for heathen solemnities, further lowered the character of the ceremony: at last we find it degraded to a mere revel;

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[*] 9th Hymn to Felix.

[†] In the silicernium, part of the food was laid upon the tomb, that the dead might seem to share the meal.

an opportunity for the commission of crime, mixed up with night-watchings, torchlight, and wine; proscribed by the Church, and entirely effaced from the ritual of Christendom.

Whether the Agape generally preceded or followed the Lord's Supper, it is difficult to decide. It has been gathered from expressions of Tertullian and others, that the holy sacrament was received fasting; a practice at variance with the original institution, in which the bread and wine were consecrated by our Saviour towards the end of, or after, supper.

Of the origin of the word, missa or mass, writers have given us a very clear account. The catechumens and unbelievers of ancient times, who were permitted to hear the Gospel and the sermon which followed it, were dismissed from church before the celebration of the Communion. This sending out or *missio*, was announced in the words, Ite, missa est — Depart, it is the dismissal. The change of missio into missa is in accordance with expressions of Cyprian and Tertullian, who used remissa for remissio. The form of address was often changed: Si quis catechumenus est, recedat: Omnes catechumeni recedant foras,* &c. Προελθετε and *απολυεσθε* were used in the Greek church. The dismissal afterwards gave its name to the entire service, and we read of the Mass of the catechumens, or ante-communion, and the Mass of the faithful, or communion. By way of analogy with this derivation, Dr. Rock has cited the corruption of Dirige into Dirge, and Mandatum into Maunday Thursday. But he is less successful in proving the high antiquity of the word Missa, which he endeavours to trace back to the year 166: the letters of Popes belonging to that age being far from unsuspected in point of genuineness.*

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* Bishop Wilberforce, in the preface to his "Eucharistica," has availed himself of the ancient custom of dismissing the unbaptized, as an argument for the more regular communion of professing Christians in our own day.

It is scarcely possible to quit this subject without an inquiry into the belief of the ancient church regarding transubstantiation. We have a distinct statement of Cyprian's opinion in his 63rd epistle, occasioned by the practice of a sect called *aquarian.* These persons contended that wine, from its intoxicating quality, was unfit for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and substituted water for it. It must be borne in mind that the wine used by the ancients was generally mixed with water when placed upon the table: it is therefore to this day a matter of doubt whether our Lord used pure wine, or wine and water, in the institution of the Supper. It is impossible to imagine any such opinion as that of the Aquarians arising in a church that held the doctrines of modern Rome: Cyprian's answer is also remarkable, and quite unintelligible, on the supposition that he believed in transubstantiation: "Since Christ has said, I am the true vine, His blood is not water, but wine: nor can His blood, by which we are redeemed and quickened, seem to be in the cup, unless that cup contain the wine by which the blood of Christ is typified."

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* Rock's Hierurgia.

The dogma of transubstantiation was not distinctly broached till the ninth century: we must not therefore expect to find it formally contradicted in the fourth: nor must we be surprised if the fathers show no endeavour to guard against an error so unlikely to be entertained. They generally confine themselves to a grateful recognition of the declaration "This is my body," though at times using expressions decisive against the Tridentine doctrine. "When Christ had taken bread," observes Tertullian, "and had distributed it to his disciples, he made it his body, saying, This is my body, that is, a figure of my body," (figura corporis mei).* And Chrysostom in his epistle to Cæsarius: "Before the bread is hallowed we call it bread, but by divine grace sanctifying it through the medium of the priest, it is freed from the appellation of bread, and deemed worthy of the title, The Lord's body: though the substance of bread remains in it."†

The baptismal rite, as has been already remarked, was often performed below ground; and fonts have been discovered in some of the chapels. The subjoined fragment from the Lapidarian Gallery seems to have belonged to a subterranean baptistery:

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* Tert. adv. Marcionem, lib. iv. cap. 40.

† This epistle, though occasionally quoted by the ancients, was suppressed throughout the middle ages. It was republished by Peter Martyr in the 16th century, and afterwards by Basnage.

CORPORIS ET CORDIS MACULAS VITALI
❦ PVRGAT ET OMNE SIMVL ⸙ ABLVITVND

The meaning of the entire inscription is clear: "The living stream cleanses the spots of body as well as of heart, and at the same time washes away all (sin):" a metrical paraphrase of the words, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." (Acts, xxii. 16.) Our own church follows close in the same track: "didst sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sins."

Church history has been ransacked in vain to find the explanation of a difficult passage in St. Paul's writings; "What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not?" All that has been discovered is the perversion of the passage made by some ancient sects, from which, though we cannot deduce the true intention of the apostle, we may learn with certainty what he did not mean. Epiphanius, writing about 390, tells us that the Cerinthians baptized the living as proxies for catechumens who had died unexpectedly. Chrysostom also remarks that the Marcionites baptized a person recently dead, by concealing under the bier a proxy who answered for him. In both these instances a false deduction appears to have been made from the words of the apostle. Epiphanius prefers the reading, "What shall they do who are baptized for dead, (at the point of death,) if the dead rise not?" The opinion of ancient Greek commentators must be considered of weight in a question turning upon the construction of a Greek sentence.*

We have already seen the epitaph of Jovina, a neophyte, three years old: another instance of early baptism is that of Romanus, of the year 371:

ROMANO NEOFITO
BENEMERENTI QVI VI
XIT · ANNOS · VIII · DXV
REQVIESCIT IN PACE DN
FL GRATIANO · AVG · II ET
PETRONIO PROBO CS

To the neophyte Romanus, the well-deserving, who lived 8 years and 15 days; he rests in peace. The Lords F. Gratian Augustus, for the second time, and P. Probus, being consuls.

Also that of Candidus, in the Lapidarian Gallery:

TEG · CANDIDVS NEOF
Q VXT · M XXI · DP NON
SEP

The tile of Candidus the neophyte, who lived twenty-one months: buried on the Nones of September.

Sepulchral tiles were used by the Pagans, as noticed by Ovid†: "The manes of the dead demand but small offerings; to them piety is more acceptable than gorgeous presents: no greedy gods inhabit the Styx. A tile covered with garlands strewed upon it, is sufficient, and fruits sprinkled with a littlesalt." The tiles were inscribed before baking, after which the letters became permanent.*

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* Epiphanius, Hæresi 28. Chrysost. Homil. in loco.

† Ovid. lib. Fastorum, ii. 535.

"Tegula porrectis satis est velata coronis."

There is one epitaph of a catechumen in the Lapidarian Gallery.

VCILIANVS BACIO VALERIO
QVI BISIT · AN VIIII ·
VIII · DIES XXII CATECVM

Ucilianus, to Bacius Valerius, a Catechumen, who lived nine years, eight months, and twenty-two days.

The earliest recorded discussion, within the Church, upon the subject of infant baptism, is that which occurred in the year 253, as to whether the rite should be deferred till the eighth day of the infant's life, or administered at an earlier period if convenient. The question was decided against the restriction to the eighth day, that the spiritual rite might not seem to be hindered by the more carnal ordinance of the Jewish dispensation.†

Persons supposed to be in danger of death were baptized by a slight sprinkling while on their beds: to these some discontented people gave the name of Clinicks. Cyprian disavows all knowledge of any distinction between washing and sprinkling, and pretends that the authors of the appellation must have derived it from the writings of Hippocrates or some other physician: the only Clinick of whom he knew any thing was the bedridden subject of Christ's healing power.*

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* Gruter gives an inscription found outside the Porta Latina:

TEG · C · COSCONI ·
FIG · ASINI · POLL ·

† Cyprian, Epist. 64.

In an after age baptism was sometimes deferred on superstitious grounds, till severe illness; even in the hope of sinning with less danger till the performance of the rite. This unworthy motive was reprobated by the church; and persons so baptized were reckoned in a certain degree infamous, being excluded from the clerical order.†

The ceremonies used in baptism, at first simple, were in course of time multiplied: the immersion was required to be threefold, or *trine;* and the renunciation of the devil and his works was thrice repeated. The catechumen was supported in the water by a sponsor, who was of the same sex with the person baptized.

The profession of faith made at baptism either by the catechumen or his sponsor, gradually resolved itself into a definite shape; in the third century it attained to the form of words now known as the apostle's creed or *symbolum.* The greater part of this venerable formula was composed in the first century, or at least early in the second. The origin of so important a production could scarcely escape becoming the subject of a legend; accordingly we find in Baronius that, the apostles having met together, Peter exclaimed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty;" "Maker of heaven and earth," added John; and so on till the conclusion, when Matthias ended with "the life everlasting, Amen." Baronius professes to quote from Augustine; but Augustine says nothing about the origin of the creed, though two apocryphal sermons bound up with the Benedictine edition of his works give the story. This distribution of the articles of faith among the twelve may be convenient for the compartments of a stained glass window, but in the "Annals of Baronius" the legend only exemplifies the deplorable credulity of the cardinal.*

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* Cyprian, Epist. 69.

† Council of Neocæsarea, A. D. 314. Canon xii.

In a church whose meetings were held below ground, artificial light was a necessary accompaniment to every service. Some persons have endeavoured to trace in this custom the origin of tapers, employed in the daytime by Romanists; and have considered the continuance of candles in churches as a thank-offering for liberty to worship God in the upper air: a grateful recollection of former privations and concealment. But history contradicts so favourable a construction of the original motive of "candle religion," and refers it undeniably to a different source.

The general habit of using lamps, mostly of terra cotta, is proved by the discovery of thousands in the catacombs. The cubicula clara, or chapels open to the day, were rare; perhaps they did not exist till after the last persecution, when the fear of discovery no longer forbad an aperture from the campagna. But the employment of artificial light for the mere purpose of rendering objects visible, is quite distinct from the ceremonial use of it, whether to illuminate the shrine of a saint, or to "do vain honour to the Father of Lights." This ceremonial use, against which the Homily* energetically declaims, appears to have been generally connected with idolatry, excepting in the case of the Jewish ritual; and was unknown to Christians until after the time of Constantine.

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* Through this miserable story Valla nearly lost his life: hearing a monk confidently repeat it while preaching, he demanded his authority, and was presently brought before the inquisitors: he was rescued by the king's troops. This happened at Naples about 1430.

The burning of lights was among the idolatrous rites forbidden by the Theodosian code: "Let no one, in any kind of place whatsoever, in any city, burn lights, offer incense, or hang up garlands, to senseless idols." Vigilantius, in reference to the custom of using lights in divine service, remarks: "We almost see the ceremonial of the Gentiles introduced into the churches under pretence of religion: piles of candles lighted while the sun is still shining; and every where people kissing and worshipping I know not what; a little dust in a small vessel wrapped in a precious cloth. Great honour do such persons render to the blessed martyrs, thinking with miserable tapers to illumine those whom the Lamb, in the midst of the throne, shines upon with the full splendour of His majesty." This passage proves that Vigilantius, who must have known well the customs of Paganism, was struck by the resemblance between them and the rites newly introduced into the Church.*

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* Against Peril of Idolatry, 3rd Part.

The habit of placing lighted lamps before tombs was also begun by the Pagans. Gruter gives this inscription:

HAVE · SEPTIMIA
SIT · TIBI · TERRA · LEVIS
QVISQVE · HVIC · TVMVLO
POSVIT · ARDENTE · LVCERNAM
ILLIVS · CINERES
AVREA · TERRA · TEGAT

Farewell Septimia: may earth be light upon thee. Whoever places a burning lamp before this tomb, may a golden soil cover his ashes.

Not only was the use of lights an element of Pagan worship, but it was universally reprobated by the Church during the first three centuries. Tertullian instances the lighting of mid-day candles as a ceremony from which all wise men are exempt: "Who forces a philosopher to lavish vain lights upon the noonday?" * Besides being "wasteful and ridiculous excess," the custom was considered disreputable by association: "If a Christian woman marries a Pagan," he observes, "she must go in and out by a gate laurelled and lanterned, ut de novo consistorio libidinum publicarum." † He urges the same objection to the usual illumination in honour of the emperors: "Why do we not shadow our doors with laurels, or break in upon the day with lamps: is it desirable that our houses should bear a disgraceful appearance on a festival day?" However weak Tertullian's argument may have been, from his choosing to misunderstand the common and harmless custom of illumination, it proves the non-existence of the usage in Christian worship. The same conclusion may be drawn from the words of Lactantius, who died in 325. He says of the pagans: "They slay rich and fat victims to God, as if He were hungry; pour libations of wine to Him, as if thirsty; and burn lights as to one living in darkness." ‡ "Do your gods,' asks Arnobius, in allusion to the story of Ceres, "do your gods go about the world with lamps and torches in full sunshine?" § No Chris-

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* Adversus Vigilantium, cap. 2. The original words, remarkable as embodying the first protest ever made against the superstitions of Christendom, have been immortalised by Jerome: "Prope ritum gentilium videmus sub prætextu religionis introductum in ecclesias, sole adhuc fulgente moles cereorum accendi, et ubicumque pulvisculum nescio quod, in modico vasculo pretioso linteamine circumdatum, osculantes adorare. Magnum honorem præbent hujusmodi homines beatissimis martyribus, quos putant de vilissimis cereolis illustrandos: quos Agnus, qui est in medio throni, cum omni fulgore majestatis suæ illustrat." Jerome denies the imputation: "O mad head, who ever worshipped the martyrs? * * * Do you dare to say that they worship you don't know what? What do you mean by you don't know what? I should like to know. Tell us plainly, and blaspheme with more freedom."

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* Apologeticus, cap. 46.

† Ad Uxorem, lib. ii. cap. 6.

‡ Institut. Divin. lib. vi. cap. 2.

§ Contrà Gentes, lib. v.

tian writer could have employed these expressions, if the ceremonial use of lights had been then established in the church.

The fourth century witnessed an almost entire revolution in forms of worship. Prudentius, it is true, represents the candles as employed only at night: for, the Præfect (Hymn to St. Laurence) calls upon the martyr to give up those golden candlesticks in which the tapers are placed for the nocturnal rites.* But Paulinus of Nola, A.D. 396, glories in the splendour of his noonday illuminations: "The bright altars," he tells us, "are crowned with thickly-clustered lamps; the fragrant lights smell of the waxed papyri; day and night they burn; so that night glitters with the splendour of the day; and day itself, glorious with heavenly honours, shines the more, its lustre being doubled by innumerable lamps."† The episcopal poet has somewhat exaggerated the effect of his lights, if we may judge from the smoky appearance of tapers in open day: though if his church was darkened, as in the ceremony of the illuminated Host of the Pauline Chapel, great brilliancy may have been produced.

The statement of Jerome on this point is not very satisfactory. After declaring that none but ignorant and worldly persons used lights in the daylight service, the Church only employing them to dispel the darkness of the night, he confesses that throughout the East candles were lighted during the reading of the Gospel, in broad day, as a sign of joy. Jerome might also have known the practice of his friend Paulinus, from whom he had received a letter introducing Vigilantius to his acquaintance. The custom was introduced into Spain, but was condemned by the Council of Elvira: "We decree," says the 34th Canon, "that no tapers be lighted in the cemeteries during the day; for the spirits of the saints must not be disturbed." Learned commentators have spent much time in showing how the souls of the dead are inconvenienced by tapers; but the author is disposed to render *spiritus sanctorum* by "the minds of the holy who worship there," which might be disturbed thereby from serious prayer.

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* Peristeph. 3. 71.

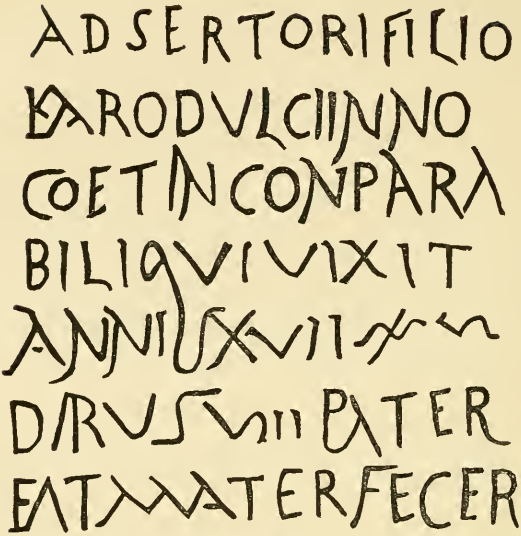
† Natalis, iii. 100.

That the lights set up by the Pagans were considered part of the establishment of their idols, appears from an inscription raised by Popilius and Popilia: it records the erection of

CVPIDINES II CVM SVIS LYCHNVCHIS
ET LVCERNA LARVM.

Two Cupids, with their candlesticks, and the lamp of the Lares. (Gruter.)

The affection of surviving friends was recorded in the Catacombs in various ways. The epithets applied to children are generally expressive of innocence and sweetness of disposition. The first example is from the Lapidarian Gallery:



ADSERTORIFILIO
KARODVLCIINNO
COETINCONPARA
BILIQVIVIXIT
ANNISXVII
DIESVIII PATER
ETMATERFECER

To Adsertor, our son, dear, sweet, most innocent, and incomparable, who lived seventeen years, six months, and eight days. His father and mother set up this.

Sometimes the length of life was expressed with great precision:

DEFVNTVS K SEPT
POMPEIANO INNO
CENTIOVIVIXII
ANN VI MESES · VIIII
DIES VIII ORAS IIII
DORMIT IN PACE

In Christ — Died on the Kalends of September, Pompeianus the innocent, who lived six years, nine months, eight days, and four hours. He sleeps in peace.

Other expressions of esteem were employed:

SPIRITO SANCTO
INNOCENTI QVI
VIXIT AN · PL · M · III

To the holy soul Innocens, who lived three years, more or less (plus minus).

DOMITIANVS ANIMA SINPLEX
DORMIT IN PACE

Domitianus, a simple soul, sleeps in peace.

The names Irene and Agape were often given to Christian women. The next four epitaphs are in the Lapidarian Gallery:

IRENE · IN PACE

Irene in peace.

MATER AGAPE FECIT

Her mother Agape set up this. In Christ.

AGAPE VIBES
IN ETERNVM

Agape, may you live for ever (for vivas).

The dative case of Agape when used as a proper name, is irregular:

AGAPENI IN PACE

To Agape in peace.

Several interesting inscriptions refer to conjugal attachment:

CLAVDIO BENEMERENTI
STVDIOSO QVI AMABIT ME · VIX
AN · P · M · XXV IN P ·

To Claudius the well-deserving and affectionate, who loved me. He lived twenty-five years, more or less. In peace.

The next imitates a usual Pagan form:

CECILIVS · MARITVS CECILIAE PLACIDINAE
COIVGI OPTIME MEMORIAE CVM QVA
VIXI ANNIS X · BENE SE · NE VLLA
QVERELLA ΙΧΘΥC

Cecilius the husband, to Cecilia Placidina, my wife, of excellent memory, with whom I lived well ten years, without any quarrel. In Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour. (Lap. Gall.)

The next is from the same collection:

DOMNINAE
NNOCENIISSINAE · ET DVLCISSIMAE COIVGI
QVAE VIXIT ANN XVI · M IIII · ET FVIT ·
IMARITATA · ANN DVOBVS · M · IIII · D · VIIII·
CVM QVA NON LICVIT FVISSE · PROPTER
CAVSAS PEREGRINATIONIS
NISI · MENSIBVS · VI
OVO · TEMPORE · VTEGOSENSI EI EXHBVI
AMOREM MEVM
NVLLISVALII · SIC DILEXERVNT
DEPOSIT · XV KAL · IVN

To Domina,

My sweetest and most innocent wife, who lived sixteen years and four months, and was married two years, four months, and nine days: with whom I was not able to live, on account of my travelling, more than six months. During which time I shewed her my love, as I felt it. None else so loved each other. Buried on the 15th before the Kalends of June.

The custom of adding an ejaculatory prayer or wish was derived from the Pagans: an instance is given from a heathen columbarium on the Esquiline Hill:

HIC RELICIAE PELOPIS
SIT TIBI TERRA LEVIS

Here are the remains of Pelops. May earth be light upon thee.

Among others, Gruter has the following:

HAVE THAIS
DII · TIBI
BENE · FACIANT

Farewell, Thais; may the gods be good to thee.

The Christians continued the habit, as in—

VIVAS VINCAS

May you live: may you conquer.

FAVSTINA DVLCIS. BIBAS
IN DEO

Sweet Faustina, may you live in God.

ZωTIKE
ZHCAICEN
KYPIωΘAPPI

Zoticus, mayest thou live in the Lord. Be of good cheer. (Lap. Gall.)

BOLOSA DEVS TI
BIREFRIGERET QVAE VI
XIT ANNOS XXXI RECESSIT
DIE XIII KAL OCT . B ☧

In Christ. Bolosa, may God refresh thee. She lived thirty-one years. She departed on the thirteenth before the Kalends of October. (Lap. Gall.)

The expression, "may God refresh thee," is also contained in another epitaph:

AMERIMNVS
RVFINAE · COIV
GICARIS · SIME
BENEMEREN
TI · SPIRITVM ·
TVVM · DEVS
REFRI · GERET

Amerimnus to Rufina, his dearest wife, the well-deserving. May God refresh thy spirit. (Lap. Gall.)

They are both explained by a third:

NICEFORVS ANIMA
DVLCIS IN REFRIGERIO

Nieephorus, a sweet soul, in refreshment.

These epitaphs prove the doctrine of the primitive Church regarding the departed souls of believers: they are not said to be in heaven, nor in purgatory, but in a state of refreshing by means of God's presence — in God —

ARETVSA
IN DEO.
(Lap. Gall.)

In Christ: as in the only epitaph of the Lapidarian Gallery containing a prayer to the deceased:

GENTiANUS FIdELIS IN PACE qUI VIX
IT ANNIS XXI MENS VIII dIES
XVI ET IN ORATIONIS TUIS
ROGES PRoNoBIS qUIASCIMUS
TE IN ☧

Gentianus a believer, in peace. Who lived twenty-one years, eight months, and sixteen days. Also in your prayers pray for us, for we know that you are in Christ.

The extreme rarity of such aspirations in ancient epitaphs is remarkable: the wish to maintain by mutual prayer some communion with the deceased is natural to mankind, and though not positively forbidden by Christianity, a sense of its futility seems to have been deeply impressed upon the converts of the first ages. The inscription to Gentianus probably belongs to the middle of the fifth century: it indicates an approach to the modern Romish practice. Yet the recorded wish of these ancient mourners can scarcely be compared with the prayers offered before the images of saints, or the legacies left for the payment of masses for the dead.

The expression "borne away by angels," applied by our Lord to blessed Lazarus, can scarcely be supposed to imply a conveyance to expiatory flames:

SEVERO FILIO DVL
CISSIMO LAVRENTIVS
PATER BENEMERENTI QVI BI
XIT ANN · IIII · ME · VIII · DIES · V
ACCERSITVS AB ANGELIS VII · IDVS IANVA

Laurence to his sweetest son Severus, the well-deserving, borne away by angels on the seventh before the Ides of January, &c.

MACVS PVER INNOCENS
ESSE IAMINTER INNOCNTIS COEPISTI
QVAM STAVILES TIVI HAEC VITA EST
QVAM TELETVM EXCIPET MATER ECLESIAE DEOC
MVNDO REVERTENTEM COMPREMATVR PEC-
TORVM
GEMITVS STRVATVR FLETVS OCVLORVM

Macus (or Marcus), an innocent boy. You have already begun to be among the innocent ones. How enduring is such a life to you! How gladly will your mother, the Church of God, receive you, returning to this world. Let us restrain our groans, and cease from weeping. (Lapidarian Gallery.)

From these epitaphs, as well as from others scattered throughout this work, it is evident that the modern Romish notions on this subject were entirely unknown to the ancient Christians. The absurdity of construing such ejaculatory prayers as we have just seen, into a support for the doctrine of Purgatory, is the more evident, when it is known that the ancients were accustomed in their prayers to commemorate all the dead, Apostles, prophets, martyrs, and even the Virgin Mary, whom no one will suppose to have passed through purifying flames. Prayers to this effect, much resembling the prayer for the church militant in the Anglican service, are contained in the so-called Liturgy of St. Chrysostom.

Sometimes, instead of the ejaculatory prayer, we find some consolatory sentiment, as

DAMALIS HIC SIC · V · D

Here lies Damalis, so God wills. (Boldetti.)

Or one of a more Pagan character:

ΕΥΨΥΧΙ ϹΕΚΟΥΝΔΟΥ
ΔΙϹΑΘΑΝΑΤΟS ΡΗΓΙΤΑΝΑ

Be of good cheer, Secunda, no one is immortal.

Mabillon* has given a sarcophagus with the words:

Θυδεις αθανατος, θαρσει Ευγενεια,
Be of good courage, Eugenia; no one is immortal.

The manner of expressing death was also varied, as in these instances:

IN PACE ET BENEDICTIONE SVFSVATI
VIXIT-ANNIS XXX · PLVS NINVS RED
DIDIT · XI · KAL · FEB ·

In Peace and blessing. Suesatis lived thirty years, more or less. He paid [the debt of nature] the eleventh Kalends of February.

AGATE FILIA DVLCISSIMA QVE
VIXIT ANN PM · VIIII ET D · LXIII
F · ATVM FECIT PRID. IDVS MART

Agate, our sweetest daughter, who lived about nine years and sixty-three days. She fulfilled her destiny on the day before the Ides of March. (Lap. Gall.)

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* The learned Benedictine has read this epitaph, "None is immortal by boldness or nobility." The inscription to Secunda was first translated by Raoul Rochette: his predecessors having read it, "twice immortal."

The usual Greek form is seen in the next:

ΙΟΥλΙΑ
ΜΑΡΚΙΑ
ΕΝΘΑΔΕ
ΚΕΙΤΑΙ

Julia Marcia lies here. (Lap. Gall.)

The principal events which affected the Church of the third and fourth centuries are, as might be expected, scarcely noticed in the Christian cemeteries. If the persecutions have been left unmentioned by the survivors of martyrs, so also has the most striking incident of secular history, the sudden and universal establishment of Christianity throughout the Roman world. No record of this circumstance can be found in the catacombs, where the Church appears as little elated by triumph, as before depressed by adversity. The number of epitaphs increases after the conversion of Constantine, indicating a spread of Christianity in the metropolis; though the worship of the gods lingered in the *pagi* or villages: hence the term Paganism. Every means short of actual persecution was adopted to erase the ancient superstition: and as the character of the augurs had sunk extremely low, they were summarily abolished by law. Divination was made a capital crime, and the use of lights, frankincense, and garlands in worship was forbidden. The civil privileges of Heathen priests were abolished, and corresponding immunities conferred upon the Christian clergy.

It was soon discovered that Christianity meditated no revenge for the past; that no rod of iron was yet to be swayed over the Gentiles. So excessive was the clemency of Constantine, that it provoked the animadversion of the provincial governors; even Eusebius dares not defend it.* In the secular business of daily life, the religion of the cross triumphantly displayed its heavenly character: the manumission of slaves, as an act of mercy, was the only business permitted on Sundays; and the crime of cursing the emperor was treated with magnanimous indifference: "If the curse be uttered in levity," decreed Theodosius, "it is to be despised, if in madness, to be pitied; if in malice, to be forgiven."

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* De Vita Constantini, lib. iv. cap. 31.

CHAP. VII.

THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIAN ART.

THE fine arts had not long arrived at maturity in Rome, when they were encountered by a power before which they were destined to be humbled to the dust. Apart from their connection with idolatry, they were themselves an object of adoration to the civilised world: sculpture had long led captive the imagination of men: and those works which even now tempt the Christian to "bow down and worship" the genius, if not the productions, of their authors, were almost universally appreciated. The severely regular drama, the most lofty style of sculpture, whose restoration to the world is the day-dream of the enthusiastic lover of art, were then living elements of society: the villa of Adrian still displays the small theatre where Greek tragedies were intoned before the Emperor and his household: and the Antinöus of the same date attests the perfection to which sculpture had attained in the Roman metropolis. Before many years, the empire of imagination passed away: and the genius of art, with "torch extinct, and swimming eyes," had to mourn over the introduction of the hieratic style, which, wherever it has appeared throughout the world, has cramped and almost annihilated the inventive faculty. Throughout the works of Egypt, Hindostan, and the Byzantine school, restrictions, similar to those which appear in the remains of the Catacombs, confined the artist to an unvaried round of repetition, beyond which it was forbidden to pass. The greatest efforts of individual genius have only displayed most glaringly the defects of the system: the intaglios of Karnac, almost the best hieratic work in existence, exhibit, perhaps the most forcibly, the hopeless struggle. In those gigantic outlines, devoid of perspective, anatomy, and truth, some persons have thought to trace the original of the Parthenaic friezes. And notwithstanding these capital defects, so vigorous is their conception, so terrible is the writhing of the captives whose entangled hair fills the grasp of their conqueror, that it is difficult to refuse to the performance a high place among works of art. With such scenes an Egyptian monarch might at pleasure decorate his palace: but the choice of subject, scale, and arrangement alone belonged to him: the imitation of nature lay altogether beyond the legitimate province of art. While we find in the better class of obelisks, execution absolutely perfect, and an admirable exactness in copyism, in vain do we seek, from the time of Moses to that of Ptolemy, the least approximation to natural forms. The Lateran obelisk, brought from the city of the Pharaohs, and supposed to have stood where Moses, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, must have daily passed beneath it, is in no way behind the Ptolemaic Denderah, notwithstanding all that art had meanwhile achieved in more favoured Greece. The lotus-leaf never alters, nor do the owl and ibis borrow a single characteristic from the models which nature has abundantly furnished in the country of the Nile.

Not the least remarkable result of these restrictions is the state of degradation to which they reduced the artist. Of any individual poet, sculptor, or painter, in Egypt, we do not possess the slightest record: yet genius was undoubtedly known among them. In Greece, on the contrary, the sculptor, embodying in majestic proportions the gods of his worship, made them what they were in public estimation; conferred immortality upon them, and shared in the honours of his own creation. It is to the cloud-compelling divinity of the Iliad, and the Thunderer of the Capitoline museum, that we are indebted for our nobler conceptions of the son of Saturn: in them we almost learn to forget the disgraceful exploits of the profligate Jupiter.

We are thus enabled to divide the productions of art into two great classes: the hieratic, including the Egyptian, Byzantine, Hindostan, Mexican, and early Christian: and the free, executed by artists, who, though generally drawing their inspiration from their creed, were not under the orders of a religious government. Of these, the Etruscan, Greek, Roman, and later Christian, stand pre-eminent: although Etruria seems to have owned two schools, — the one producing stiff and unnatural designs; and the other, of which little now remains, rivalling Greece itself in beauty of conception. The two styles differ still more widely in intention: the one appeals to the reason, conveying generally a symbolic meaning; while the other, requiring no interpreter, exerts a more powerful influence, from addressing chiefly the passions and imagination.

The stamp impressed upon Christian art in the beginning of its career, was destined to remain no longer than the state of the world should render necessary. After lying torpid during twelve hundred years, the dreary winter of Europe's history, Art awoke with the spring of the Revival, mature in age, though marked with the characteristics of extreme youth. Like the newly emancipated insect, it appeared at once in its fullest splendour, a sad presage of its brief existence: and the days of the Transfiguration, the Moses, and the Sistine Judgment, have passed away,—never, to all appearance, to be restored.

The application of the arts to Christian purposes was not, as we have seen, permitted without scruple. They had been long devoted to the cause of Polytheism; they were its daughters: and even when apparently converted to the service of Christianity, they remained but too faithful to their parent. For the little that they contributed to their new mistress, crippled and fettered as they were, they had their revenge in this, that they carried back the world to the days of their former triumphs. The buildings, the statues, the drama, and the circus, all perpetuated the Paganism of older times, and forced the leaders of the Church to adapt their precepts, as much as possible, to the bias of the popular mind. So the many wives of Solomon, each the daughter of a king, added nothing to the glory of the Jewish monarch, while they turned his heart from the worship of Jehovah. The treachery of Pagan art was never more apparent than when the Pantheon of Rome, originally devoted to Jupiter and all the gods, was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and all the Saints: the building seemed to be Christianised, but in truth it was Christianity that was Paganised. Provided men are worshipped there, it matters little by what names they are invoked.

It has been well remarked by Raoul Rochette, that, of all the elements of Paganism admitted to the service of Christianity, sculpture, which had struck its roots most deeply in the old soil, was the least capable of being transplanted into the new. This fact cannot be better exemplified than by the bas-reliefs of the history of Jonah, where much is borrowed from heathen myths. In the specimen here copied from a sarcophagus deposited in the Vatican library*, the storm is personified by a

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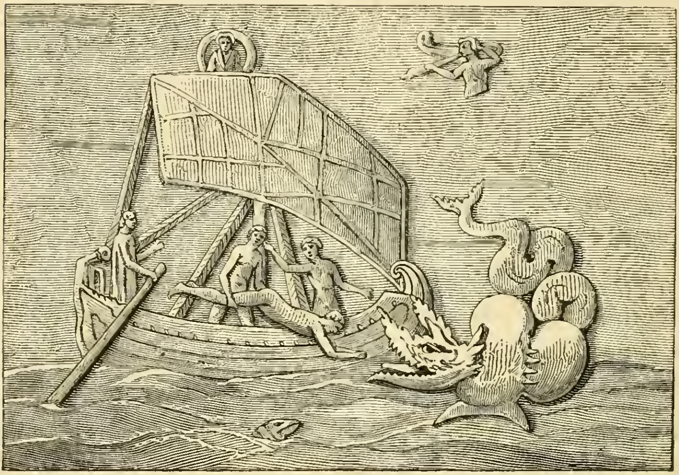
* The Christian bas-reliefs of the Vatican have been repeatedly published by the Roman antiquarians. During the author's residence in Rome, he obtained access to some drawings recently executed by an Italian artist, which appeared somewhat more characteristic of the rude style than the elaborate copperplates of Aringhi, &c. Of these drawings he has availed himself, and from them are taken many of the woodcuts contained in this chapter.

Triton blowing through a convoluted shell: and Iris, with floating scarf, hovering over the sail, indicates the tranquillity that followed the ejection of the prophet. The ship is copied from the type usually seen in Pagan frescoes, and the fish is taken from sculptures representing Andromeda exposed to a sea monster; a story invented long after the history of Jonah, and probably founded upon it. The earliest writer mentioning Andromeda is Apollodorus, who flourished about 115 years before Christ, and 750 after Jonah.* The scene of both narratives lies at Joppa, designated by Jerome as "the port of the fugitive Jonah, and, if I may add something from the fables of the poets, witness of Andromeda bound to a rock." It is remarkable that strong evidence of the existence of a sea-



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* Bibliotheca, lib. ii. cap. 4. He mentions Andromeda, but not Joppa.

monster long remained at Joppa. Pomponius Mela tells us that "they still exhibit huge bones of a marine animal, the plain traces of Andromeda's preservation by Perseus."* Pliny describes Joppa as "placed upon a hill, with a projecting rock, on which they still show the marks of Andromeda's chains." Elsewhere he describes the bones of the monster which Scaurus brought to Rome from Joppa: the skeleton measured forty feet in length, having a spine one foot and a half thick, and ribs larger than those of an elephant. There is also a tradition which describes Jason as escaping, armed and unhurt, from the mouth of a sea-monster. Such testimonies imply a better foundation for the story than the fable of Apollodorus.

By the ancient Church, the history of Jonah was deemed typical of death and the resurrection, and ranked among the most popular objects of representation employed in the Catacombs. In subterranean chapels, where the living were separated from the dead by a mere tile or slab of stone, and sometimes liable to be mingled with them by the violence of their enemies even before the conclusion of their worship, the hope of a future life naturally occupied a prominent place in their creed. The words, "I believe in the resurrection of the dead," must have resounded with solemn import through those dreary caves; and all that could help a trembling faith to seize the joyful reality was eagerly adopted. Jonah, escaping from the whale, or reclining beneath the gourd, may be every where seen, at first scratched upon the walls, and afterwards sculptured on sarcophagi. In the emblem of a risen saint, the sins and sorrows of the original hero were forgotten; and the gourd, copied from a species still sold in the Roman market, represented less the ephemeral protection of the complaining prophet, than the cool foliage of the tree of life. At times, the latter part of the history is still more condensed: the ship, the whale, and the gourd, signifying earth, hades, and heaven, are brought into one point of view:

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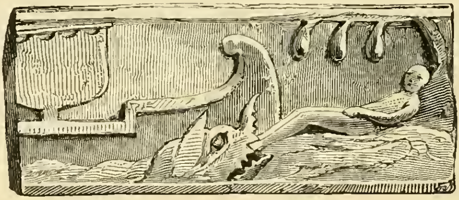
* De Situ Orbis, lib. i. cap. 11.



the subject of the awful adventure, but just ejected from the ship, and scarcely extricated from the jaws of the monster, is already overshadowed by the ripened fruit. But there is yet a further meaning in this often-repeated sculpture: "a greater than Jonas is here."

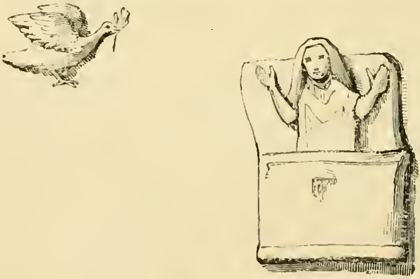
It was the divine application of this figure to the death and resurrection of Christ that gave to it its peculiar interest: for, by a happy inference the church saw in the rising of her Head, the certain resuscitation of His members. In this small fragment of marble, the Christian of ancient times traced his own career: his passage from the unstable element too well expressing his present life, through the gate of death, not inaptly represented by the terrible monster, suffered to engorge, though not to retain, its prey: to a land beyond those swelling floods, where the head of the tempest-tossed wanderer rests on the root of that plant whose fruit protects him from the angry sun.

The plant which covered Jonah's booth gave rise to a lively discussion in the beginning of the fifth century. The sculptors of the catacombs, adopting the reading of the Italic version, represented it as an ordinary gourd. Jerome thought proper to change it to ivy: an alteration which eventually excluded his version from the diocese of Hippo. The Hebrew is *Kikaion*, a species of quick-growing vine, common in Syria. Aquila had rendered this in Greek by ivy: and Jerome thinking that plant the best Western representative of the Syrian creeper, transferred the ivy to the Vulgate.

The irritation produced by this change was excessive: the people of Tripoli rebelled, and raised an uproar in the Church. The loss of the gourd, always a favourite in that burning clime, affected them not less than it had Jonah: and to make things worse, the Jews maliciously assured them that the true rendering of the Hebrew was gourd. Augustine took part with the "Cucurbitarians," as Jerome called them, and stopped the reading of the Vulgate throughout his diocese. It was not without good reason, he believed, that the Seventy had used the word *gourd.* *

The history of Noah early took a powerful hold on Christian minds, either from its resemblance to the myth of Deucalion, with which they were already familiar, or from its application to the baptismal rite by St. Peter. The first sculptures and paintings of Noah were borrowed from Paganism, which thus repaid a debt it owed to Divine Scripture, whence it had copied almost entire the history of Deucalion. So little had the story been altered, that we find Plutarch citing as a common opinion, "that the dove sent out from the ark brought to Deucalion a certain index of stormy weather by its return, and of tranquillity by its flying away." †

On examining any of the numerous sculptures representing Noah in the ark, we are struck by the extreme discrepancy between the work of art, and



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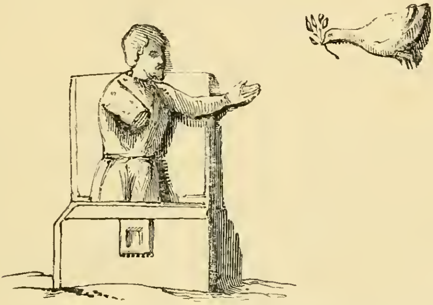
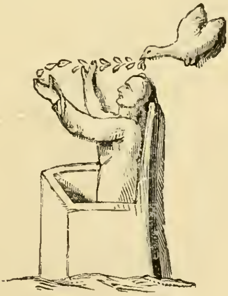
* Inter op. Hieronym, ep. 76.

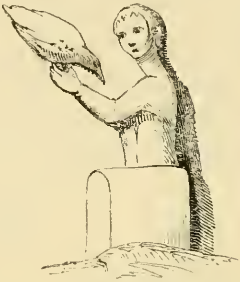
† De Solertiâ Animalium. The substitution of *Deucalion* for *Noah* in this passage, is so natural, that it might escape the notice of a hasty reader.

the narrative which it professes to illustrate; nor is it a sufficient answer to our surprise, to be informed that this is owing to the scarcity of the Old Testament writings; since the traditional knowledge of the preservation of Noah's family was too general to allow of such ignorance. If we look for explanation to other paintings or sarcophagi, we find nothing to help out the story; the same want of correct information is every where observable: the ark is a mere box, provided with lid and lock; the family of the Patriarch is reduced to a single figure, and the animals are altogether omitted. If we explore the entire school of art of the fourth century, we shall find but little variation in the treatment of the subject: the execution progresses



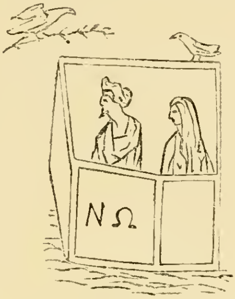


from bad to worse, but the absurdities are stereotyped. The artist, in a desperate attempt to evade the charge of direct copyism, resolves upon a change of position: the Patriarch turns from side to side, or receives the dove in a new attitude. This idea of Noah is evidently not derived from the book of Genesis: yet the mutual resemblance of the sculptures indicates plainly some common original.



Early in the last century, the attention of antiquarians was roused by the discovery of certain medals displaying two figures floating in a small box, accompanied by two doves, one of which bears an olive branch. The inscriptions showed them to have been struck in Apamea, during the reign of Septimius Severus, probably after an inundation of that province. The explanation of these medals was long hindered by the repeated forgery of duplicates, which differed from the originals only in the letters inscribed on the box. Falconieri read them ΝΩΕ, the Greek name of Noah; others made them out ΝΗΤΩΝ; some could find no characters at all; and a fourth party deciphered the abbreviation ΝΕΩΚ. The wood-cut annexed is taken from

Falconieri's plate, omitting the rest of the subject, which represents the same figures praying on dry



land. The third letter has also been omitted, as an acknowledged forgery.*

If the letters themselves have been variously read, their meaning has furnished no less room for conjecture. The name of Noah; the dual of *εγω*, in allusion to a line of Ovid; the termination of *απαμεων* written backwards; have all had their advocates. But time, by exposing the forgeries, and bringing to light fresh specimens of the authentic coinage, has revealed the true meaning of the contested inscription. The figures in the box turn out to be those of Deucalion and Pyrrha: the box itself is not the ark of Noah, but a chest or *κιϐωτος*, selected by the mint-master from the correspondence between its name and that of the district (in Greek): and the letters are **ΝΕΩΚ**, a contraction of *νεωκορων*, signifying *curatores* of the sacred rites and temples. The Neocori appear on many medals of the time; and their functions have been copiously illustrated by antiquarians of the last century.*

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* Gronovii Thesaurus, tom. x. Another engraving is to be found in Sestini's work on coins, plate x. It is even more rude than the sketch given above.

There can be no reasonable doubt that this preservation of Deucalion, represented in a peculiar manner to gratify the vanity of the Apameans, is the model from which all the bas-reliefs of Noah have been imitated. The readiness with which the Pagan version of the story was adopted by the Christians, and the servile copyism by which the type thus obtained was perpetuated, exemplify in a striking manner the condition of nascent Christian art. The first sculptor who attempted the subject deviated widely from the inspired history; reduced the family of the patriarch to a single person, and the ark, containing beasts and birds innumerable, to a box; yet, rather than hazard an original idea, his successor must repeat, and hand down unchanged, the type so strangely consecrated.

The philosopher Celsus condescends to notice the Christians' account of the deluge, "with the ridiculous ark that held every thing inside it," † as a piece of his mythology amplified by them. It speaks strongly for the power of education over the mind, that Celsus, brought up to believe the enormous follies of heathenism, should stumble at the just interposition of Almighty power in the case of righteous Noah.

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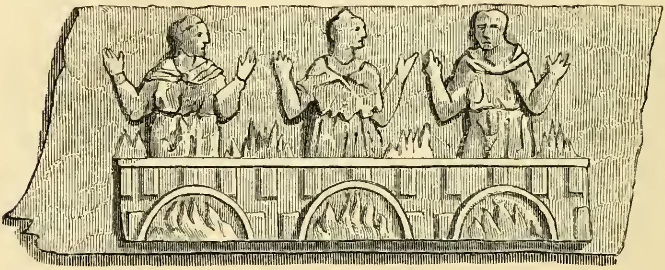
* There are on this subject three essays in the Archæologia, vol. iv. Also an excellent notice by Raoul Rochette, Mémoires de l'Academie de Belles Lettres, t. xiii.

† Origen in Celsum, lib. iv.

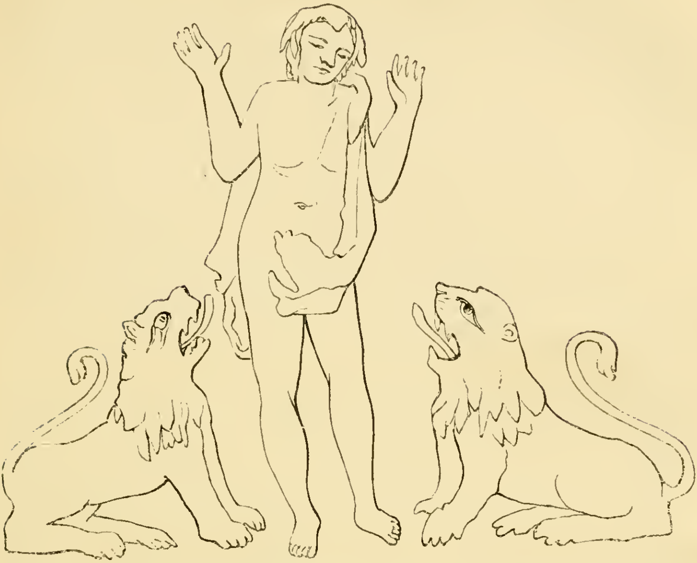
The preservation of God's people through difficulties, more especially if effected by a miracle, generally formed the subject of those sculptures which were not executed for the sake of their allegorical meaning. The perils of Daniel and the three youths, from their resemblance to the circumstances in which the Roman Christians were placed, enjoyed a preference. The genius of their religion was conspicuously displayed in this choice of subjects. Surrounded by real dangers and persecutions, they did not seek to celebrate their own sufferings, still less to immortalise individual heroism: but passing by the ungulæ and the stakes with which they were most conversant in daily life, they drew their humble measure of inspiration from the bloodless confessions of Shadrac and Daniel. A people revelling in luxurious ease may find gratification in applying the resources of art to the illustration of martyr-suffering. A Parmegiano, himself safe from the rack and the flames, had leisure to elaborate the well-proportioned figure of his heroine, to embody in a dark and rugged executioner all that could contrast with the fair and undraped form of the victim, and to array in the terrors of chiaroscuro the instruments of torture and death: till the world, worked up to frenzy by the sight, fancied itself ready to die in the cause, and by acclamation voted itself Christian. But the ancient Church never represented scenes of a painful character: the deliverance of a Jew from the lions of Babylon was preferred to the destruction of a Christian by those of the Colosseum; and the three Hebrews preserved from the rage of Nebuchadnezzar were a more consolatory subject than the victims of Neronian cruelty, wrapped in pitch-cloth, and used as torches to illuminate the circus.



In this fragment of a sarcophagus, the usual licence of early art is perceived: the mighty furnace of the plains of Dura is reduced to a mere oven in three compartments: and the fourth figure, "like unto the Son of God," is omitted.

The figures of Daniel appear in every degree of rudeness; although the subject, requiring, as it was thought, a knowledge of the nude, presented difficulties equal to that of Adam and Eve. The specimen on the opposite page is from a Catacomb painting.

The Good Shepherd, a character appropriated by our Saviour, was an emblem not unknown to Paganism. The sylvan deity Pan was anciently represented by sculptors with a goat thrown across his shoulders, and a Pan's pipe, or syrinx, in



his hand. According to Pausanias, the people of Tanagra worshipped Mercury under the name of Criophorus, or the Ram-bearer; and Calamis executed a statue of Mercury with the ram borne on his shoulders. The yearly feast in his honour was kept by one of the youths bearing a lamb round the walls of the city.* The Roman poets also make allusion to the custom of carrying a stray or neglected lamb on the shoulders of the shepherd. Calpurnius thus addresses a friend employed in farming: "Think it not beneath you, when visiting the sheep-folds at night, to bear on your shoulders the exhausted sheep, and to carry in your bosom the trembling young."† Tibullus also:

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* Pausanias, lib. ix.

† Calpurn. Eclog. v. 39.

"Be not too indolent to carry home in your bosom the lamb or kid deserted by its forgetful mother."* Almost the same expressions are applied by Isaiah to God's care of His people. Our Lord, therefore, only adapted to His purpose a figure well known both to Jews and Greeks, and ennobled it for ever by application to Himself.

The Good Shepherd was a type much valued by the early Church, and the character in which they most delighted to represent our Lord. It was in this form that the excited imagination of Perpetua figured Him to herself: in her dream she ascended the ladder that reached to heaven, and saw there a man with white hair, in the dress of a shepherd, milking his sheep. Tertullian also refers to the Good Shepherd painted on the sacramental cups: "Pastor quem in calice depingis."†

In the tomb of the Nasones, as noticed by Raoul Rochette, who has greatly elucidated the early history of Christian art, may be seen, among many mythological paintings, the figure of a shepherd with a sheep on his shoulders, and a crook in his hand, surrounded by the Four Seasons.‡ What was intended by this heathen painting is not clear; but, by a slight alteration, the same composition was soon converted into a "Bonus Pastor" by Christian artists. The change, however, was slow; the Pan's pipe remained for some time in the hand of the Chief Shepherd, and the Roman dress was seldom abandoned.

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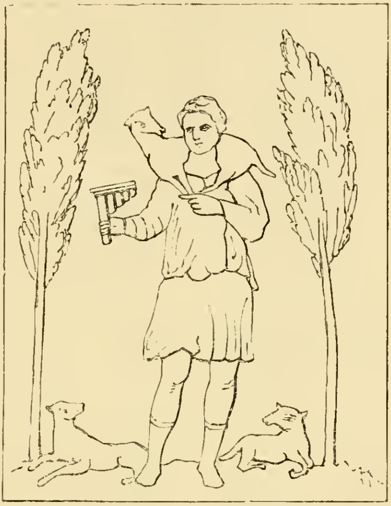
* Eleg. ii. 11, 12.

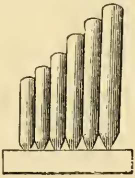
† De Pudicitiâ, cap. 10.

‡ Bellori, Tomb of the Nasones, plate xxii.

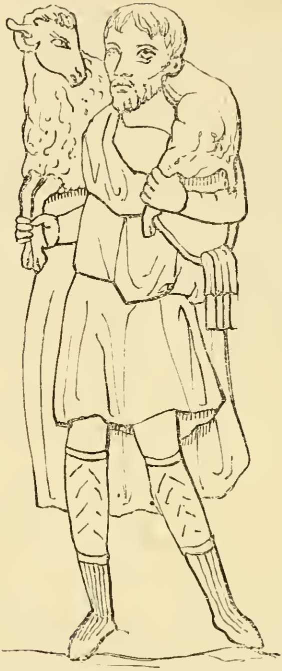


This painting, found in a catacomb chapel, seems to be an imitation of the Naso picture, or perhaps of the statue by Calamis.

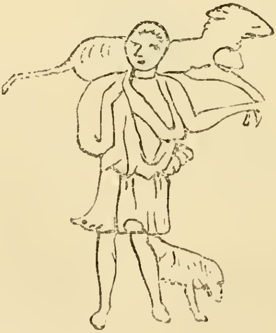
The Pan's pipe subjoined, is also found in the hand of a "Good Shepherd," in the catacombs.



The subject is more thoroughly Christianised in the next specimen, taken from a sarcophagus. The shepherd, more advanced in years, with the eyes turned towards heaven, is provided with the belt and scrip proper to his calling.

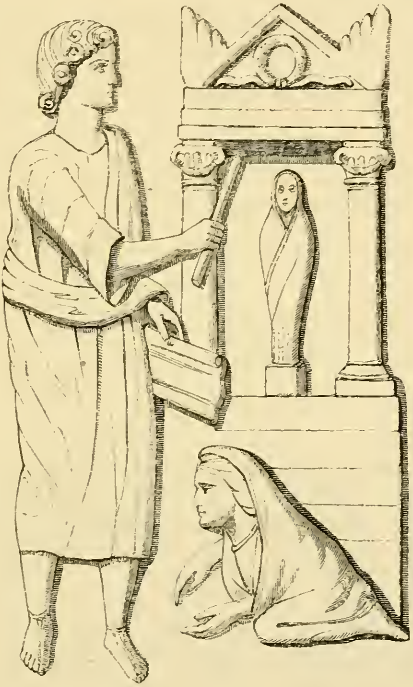


But bas-reliefs and paintings were for the rich: we must see how the humble piety of the poor expressed the chosen emblem of Him, who, bearing the world on His shoulders, bears also the wandering sheep.



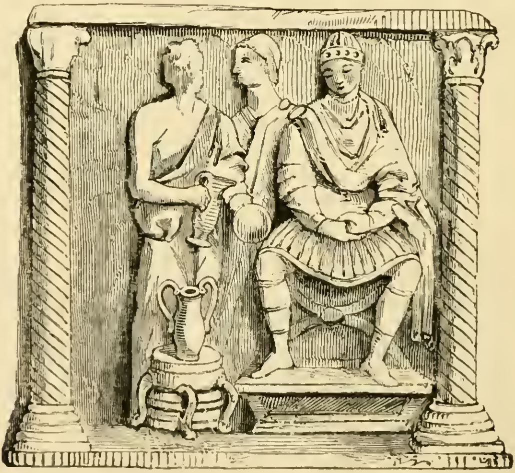
This figure, scratched upon a tombstone, is taken from Aringhi.

The miracles wrought by our Saviour were a standard subject for sculpture: a series of them was generally placed on one side of every large sarcophagus. Among them may be particularised the resurrection of Lazarus, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the restoration of sight to the blind, and the cure of the paralytic. In the resurrection of Lazarus, here copied from a marble sarcophagus in the Vatican library, the usual arrangement of the figures is observed.



In most representations of this subject, the temple-shaped tomb is hung with garlands, in the manner of a Roman sepulchre, and altogether unlike the gospel description of a cave and stone. The mummy of Lazarus, and the reduced figure of his sister Mary, are repeated in innumerable forms, many of which would be unintelligible without the aid of comparison.

In all the pictures and sculptures of our Lord's history, no reference is made to his sufferings or death: an apparent exception is met with in the bas-relief representing Pilate washing his hands; but a moment's reflection will explain the sculptor's motive for choosing that subject. The Christians, never forgetting the crime of treason imputed to them, were anxious to clear themselves of the charge; and employed their best eloquence to prove, that by daily praying for the Emperor, they were rendering him greater service than the

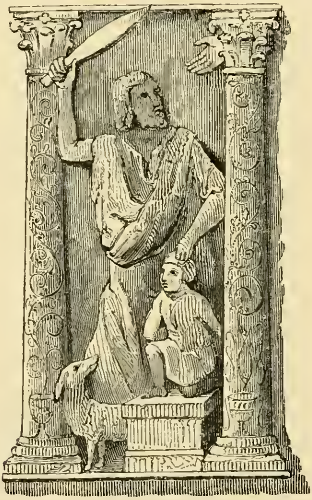


heathen possibly could. Every acquittal of a Christian was triumphantly adduced in their own justification: even the slight favour shown by Trajan was magnified into a licence. The mutilated bas-relief here copied, derived its value from the declaration of Pilate, "I find no fault in this man," rather than from any reference to our Lord's sufferings.

In this feeble composition, occupying a compartment on the side of a sarcophagus, there are still some reminiscences of the antique: the head of Pilate's wife, seen in profile, is better sketched than usual: and the method of washing, implied by the empty bowl, is characteristic. In the East, the water is still poured from the vase over the hands, and caught by the bowl, so as not to pass over them twice.

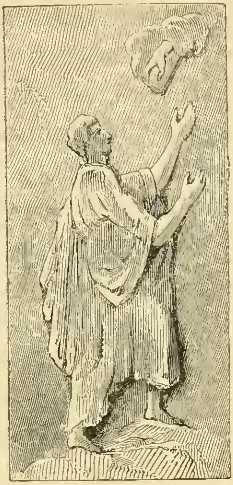
The ancient Christians, though continually in the habit of representing the Saviour, never designed the First Person of the Trinity in human form. A single piece of sculpture has been found in the Catacombs, supposed to throw doubt upon the truth of this assertion: it exhibits Cain and Abel bringing their gifts to an aged man seated in a chair; this figure has been interpreted by Romanists as that of the Almighty Father. But on this subject the opinion of Raoul Rochette, himself a Romanist, is opposed to them. "I doubt," he says, "the reality of this explanation, contrary to all that we know of Christian monuments of the first ages, where the intervention of the Eternal Father is only indicated in the abridged and symbolic manner proper to antiquity, by the image of a hand. In this particular instance," he continues, "I should prefer understanding by this figure of an old man seated, Adam receiving the gifts of his sons, to offer them to God."

There are among the Catacomb sculptures, two well-marked instances of this indication of the Deity by a hand: Abraham offering up Isaac, and Moses receiving the law.



In this often-repeated subject, the Christian might behold the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God, and the interposition of Divine power on his own behalf. An accurate rendering of Bible history is not often found in these ancient works: it is often difficult to suppose that their authors had access to the inspired Word.

The hand is sometimes encircled by clouds, as if to signify more strongly its symbolic character.



This figure of Moses receiving the law, as well as that of Abraham, occur on sarcophagi in the Vatican Library.

The prohibitions of the Fathers against visible representations of God were decisive: even Paulinus, who greatly promoted the employment of sacred art in churches, stopped short of this impiety. He speaks of the three Persons of the Trinity as being represented by a Lamb, a Dove, and a Voice from Heaven. According to Milman, the French have claimed the "happy boldness" of first introducing the Father in human form. This assertion is made upon the strength of an illuminated Bible, attributed to the ninth century.

It has been already stated that no gloomy subjects occur in the cycle of early Christian art: some very slight and doubtful exceptions have been found. The dismal pictures of Sebastian, St. Peter, and St. Paul, copied by Bosio and Aringhi, evidently belong to much later times, as proved by the ecclesiastical dresses of the figures, and the modern character of the tapers introduced. A martyrdom of Salome, the only work of the kind known to D'Agincourt, was referred by him to the tenth century; and that of Felicitas, more lately discovered, is brought down by R. Rochette at least as late as the seventh. About the close of the fourth century, Prudentius described pictures of the martyrdoms of Cassianus and Hippolytus as then existing. We must not, therefore, altogether refuse a place to the new school of martyr-painting, the *drame horrible* of the time, among the works of the fourth century. The death of Hippolytus, if at all resembling the poet's rapturous description, must have been a disgusting performance:

> Docta manus virides imitando effingere dumos,
> Luserat et minio russeolam saniem.
> Cernere erat ruptis compagibus ordine nullo,
> Membra per incertos sparsa jacere situs.*

In looking onward from the origin of Christian sculpture, we can trace no subsequent rise of the art, as in the case of painting and architecture. Like a tree planted in uncongenial soil, it became permanently stunted and dwarfish: and the remarkable branches afterwards put forth by it, were not properly of its own growth, but grafts upon the more fertile stock of sacred painting. Thus the knowledge of anatomy and design necessary to the production of Michael Angelo's Moses, was not accumulated by a succession of sculptors, but developed in the Roman and Florentine schools of painting. The converse held good in the Pagan world; in the Aldobrandini marriage we find the colouring and effect altogether subordinate to the drawing of the figures: and the best ancient pictures display rather a sculptor's idea of painting, than the work of a separate school of that branch of art.

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* In describing the friends of Hippolytus gathering the remains, Prudentius seems to be rather indulging his inveterate habit of exaggerating, than describing faithfully the contents of the picture: —

> Implebantque sinus visceribus laceris,
> Ille caput niveum complectitur, ac reverendam
> Caniciem molli confovet in gremio,
> Hic humeros, truncasque, manus, et brachia, et ulnas,
> Et genua, et crurum fragmina nuda legit.

Peristephanon, Hymn iv.

Sacred painting, in professing to preserve the portraits of the first founders of Christianity, proffers a strong claim upon our attention. The representations of the Saviour, which became very numerous in the fourth century, agree so remarkably with each other, that it has been supposed by many that some authentic portrait must have been preserved. To support this idea, numberless fables have been invented: some writers having made St. Luke a painter, that he might be believed to have painted our Lord and His Mother: and by similar authority, Nicodemus has become a sculptor. In the fourteenth century, Nicephorus discovered that the Virgin Mary had long hazel eyes, hands and feet somewhat taper, and a nose slightly beyond the common size; that she was of moderate stature, although there had been persons who called her tall: that she never smiled when addressing men, and never betrayed in her countenance the emotions of shame or anger. He professes to quote from Epiphanius, who lived nearly a thousand years earlier, and who wrote a treatise against the Antidicomarians. The author has expended some time in a fruitless search for this passage in Epiphanius; and Cardinal Baronius had no better success, being forced to quote the opinion of Epiphanius from the writings of Nicephorus.*

Among the portraits of our Lord, pretended to have been taken during His life time, the most celebrated is that said to have been presented to Abgarus. Eusebius, translating from a Syriac manuscript found at Edessa, tells us that Abgarus (or Agbarus), king of that city, having heard of our Saviour's miracles, conceived an earnest desire to see Him, and sent a messenger, requesting Him to take up His abode at Edessa, as a shelter from the malignity of the Jews. The kindness of Abgarus was acknowledged by the divine wanderer, who wrote a letter, commending the faith of Abgarus, and explaining the nature of His own mission, which forbad the proposed visit. The entire story rests upon the authority of this manuscript, there being no apostolic tradition on the subject. Eusebius wrote this about 320.

But this narrative was too simple for later writers, who pretended that Abgarus sent with the letter a painter, to bring back a portrait of the Saviour; but this painter being too much dazzled by His outward splendour to execute the commission, Christ miraculously produced a likeness which was sent to Abgarus. From the possession of this portrait, Edessa was considered impregnable; a promise to that effect, though not exactly contained in the letter, being supplied, say the historians, by the faith of the Edessenes. About the year 450, Chosröe, king of Persia, having heard of the boasted impregnability of the city, determined to put it to the proof. Procopius, who wrote about 560, informs us that Chosröe was at first miraculously prevented from reaching the city. His account is probably not far from the truth: on the road which Chosröe took, was a small village named Batne, distant one day's journey from Edessa. Arriving there at night he took up his quarters, and resumed his route next morning: but after the day's march, was surprised to find himself exactly where he had spent the previous night. This fruitless travel was repeated the next day with no better result. A treaty was then set on foot between the Edessenes and their enemy, which ended by their paying two hundred pounds of gold to induce him to retire. Chosröe afterwards made a second attack upon Edessa, but was repulsed with great loss: his troops were defeated, and his machines burnt. Procopius does not seem to be aware of the existence of the portrait, and attributes the burning of the machines to the well-concerted stratagems of the Edessenes.

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* Nicephori Hist. Eccles. ii. cap. 23.

Evagrius, who lived about 600, as if dissatisfied with the omission of the portrait, altered the story, though still professing to quote from Procopius, who was too formidable an authority to be lightly contradicted. Chosröe, having besieged the city with a powerful army, threw up an enormous scaffolding of timber, and prepared to march his troops directly over the walls. The Edessenes now bethought themselves of the portrait, and by the use of it imparted such miraculous qualities to the water of their aqueduct, that when sprinkled upon the hostile structure, it insured its speedy combustion.

In the year 787, the portrait was again heard of; at the second Nicene council, Leo, a "religiosissimus lector," (they were all honourable men at that council, when they had anything idolatrous to support,) declared that he had recently seen the picture at Edessa, and that the inhabitants still worshipped it. Nothing was now wanting, but a more definite account of its origin: this was furnished by Theodorus Studita, about 820: "The Saviour, having applied to His face a piece of cloth, thereon expressed and painted the likeness of His countenance. He afterwards sent it to Abgarus, who had requested it."

The picture next came to Rome. First, we hear from Martin Polonus in 1250, that "behind the altar of St. Balbina in Asbeston, is kept the portrait of the Saviour divinely executed." In 1584, Onuphrius Panvinus tells us that it was in St. Lawrence's church. And in 1685, Mabillon is taken to see it in the Campus Martius: "On Saturday we saw in the church of St. Silvester, the canvas painting of Christ, which He sent to Abgarus. It was brought here by some Greek monks."* This history of the portrait may be concluded by Aringhi's lamentation over those who were incredulous enough to disbelieve its miraculous powers. "Oh, that the mad and impudent innovators, who live to despise the sacred images, would learn that the power of the Divinity represented, resides in them, and so draw from them the medicine of health!"†

All the fabulous histories of such portraits are overturned by the testimony of Augustine, who expressly declares that no authentic portraits of the Holy Family, or of the Apostles, were in existence. "Who," he asks, "on reading or hearing what the Apostle Paul has written, or what has been told concerning him, does not picture to himself the face of the Apostle, and of those whose names are there mentioned? Yet among so many who read, each conceives differently of their form and features, and it is quite uncertain whose idea is most like the truth. * * * For even the fleshly countenance of our Lord is varied by the diversity of innumerable opinions, and so painted: which, nevertheless, was but one, whatever that may have been. * * * Nor do we know the face of the Virgin Mary. Let us beware lest our faith lie in matters of fiction (fides ne ficta); if we believe regarding our Lord what is not true, faith is vain, and love not pure. But whether or not His countenance was such as occurs to us in thinking of Him, we are completely ignorant."*

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* The Greek monks are not an uncommon resource in difficulties of this sort; they are about as satisfactory as the "Greek calends."

† Eusebii lib. i. c. 14. Procopius, de bello Persico, lib. ii. cap. 12. Evagrius, lib. iv. c. 26. Harduin's Councils, t. iv. 675. Theodorus Studita, vita, c. 69. M. Polonus, de quatuor regnis, p. 9. Panvinus, de præcipuis urbis Romæ. Mabillon, Iter Italicum. Aringhi, lib. v. cap. 4.

The Gnostics, it is well known, had portraits of our Saviour, professing to be copies of the likeness said to have been taken by command of Pontius Pilate. For the Pagan honours which they paid to these, they are reproached by Irenæus.

Epiphanius accuses the women of the Collyridian sect, of offering bread to the Virgin Mary, and declaims vehemently against their idolatrous worship of her: but he says nothing of any images possessed by them. "Let Mary be held in honour," he observes, εν τιμη Μαρια εστω, "but let her not be worshipped."†

Since no likenesses of our Lord were possessed by the orthodox up to the fourth century, it becomes a question of some difficulty, whence they procured the type which was almost universally received in the fifth.

Perhaps the best answer to the question is to be found in the fact, that the early Church preserved traditional descriptions of the persons of our Saviour, St. Peter, and St. Paul. The popular sentiment regarding these being once embodied in painting, nothing remained but to copy and perpetuate it; and the first study may have served as a model to the whole school of Christian art in Rome.

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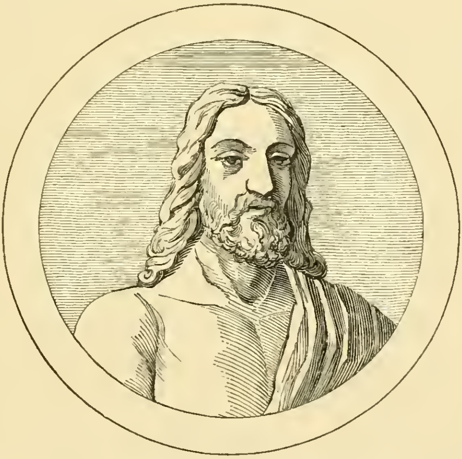
* De Trinitate, lib. viii. cap. 4.

† Epiphanius adv. Hæreses.

The painting, of which an engraving is here given, is supposed to be the earliest professed portrait of our Lord extant; it was found in a chapel in the cemetery of Callistus, and belongs to about the end of the fourth century.



It has been said that the countenance usually given to Christ is copied from that of the Jupiter Tonans of the Vatican Museum: the two agree in majesty and tranquil benevolence; but beyond this, a likeness can scarcely be traced. Nor do the Gnostic gems furnish the original of this catacomb picture, which must be regarded as a conventional representation, invented in the fourth century.

About 330, Constantia, the sister of Constantine, wrote to Eusebius, desiring him to procure her a portrait of Christ. Eusebius was staggered by the request, and evaded it by inquiring whether she wished a likeness of His human or of His divine nature, neither being within the power of the painter to represent. He has not thought fit to preserve this letter, which is only known from the use made of it at the second council of Nice, where it was read by Gregory from the acts of a preceding council.* Augustine, while he denies the existence of an authentic portrait, mentions pictures of Christ and the Apostles on walls. The custom of painting these personages together, gave rise to some mistakes: the ignorant Africans began to think that St. Paul had been one of Christ's original disciples. Others, who had composed works of magic, and attributed them to Christ, went so far as to assert that they were epistles from Him to Peter and Paul. "I suppose," remarks Augustine, "that this idea came into their heads from seeing Peter and Paul painted together with Christ in many places. * * * And justly do they deserve to err, who seek Christ and His Apostles, not in the holy volumes, but on painted walls. No wonder that those deceivers should be in turn deceived by the painters."†

The custom of painting the interior of churches with sacred subjects made great progress in the fourth century, when the Council of Elvira had the boldness to condemn it. The prohibition, though distinctly expressed, has not been understood by Romanists in its obvious sense:

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* Labbæus, Concilia. t. vii.

† De Consensu Evangelistarum, lib. i. c. x.

"Placuit picturas in ecclesiâ esse non debere, ne quod colitur aut adoratur in parietibus depingatur." "We decree that there ought not to be pictures in churches; lest what is worshipped or adored be painted on the walls." The Father Maimbourg attributes this prohibition to the fear lest by damp or Pagan violence any injury should be inflicted on the sacred figures. Others confine the prohibition to images of the Divine Persons, as they alone were included in the definition, "what is worshipped or adored." But the canon contains its own explanation: it forbids the existence of any pictures whatever in churches, lest objects of too sacred a character should at last be painted on the walls. The Spanish Fathers were therefore opposed to the custom then beginning to prevail in Italy.

Christian painting, as we have seen in the representations of Daniel, the Agape, and the fossor Diogenes, made considerable progress in the chapels of subterranean Rome. The best early description of church painting is given by Paulinus. Surrounded by a mass of illiterate and half-christianised peasants, who flocked together for the festival of St. Felix, their bishop viewed with distress their ignorance of Scripture history, and the carnal nature of their devotions. Eating, drinking, and midnight riot appeared to constitute their service; and to remedy this state of things, Paulinus caused the inside of his church to be painted with Scripture subjects, which might both instruct the people, and rival the attractions of the wine cup. "While examining the pictures," he argued, "they may forget the feast; and painting may beguile hunger. The gazer drinks in sobriety, wine is forgotten: and as they look away the day, the cups grow fewer in number, since less time remains for feasting."* These sanguine expectations, there is reason to fear, were not fulfilled.

If authentic portraits of our Lord are not to be met with, much less can we expect to find any likeness of the Virgin Mary; for it is a fact notorious to every one conversant with ecclesiastical history, that she was scarcely noticed in writings, paintings, or sculptures, till late in the fourth century. Doubtless due honour was at all times paid to her memory, and all ages witnessed the fulfilment of her triumphant exclamation: "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." But in primitive writings that have come down to us, there are few notices of her besides that of Irenæus, who describes her as the advocate of Eve, bringing into the world One, who was to destroy that which Eve had introduced.†

The silence of the heathen regarding the worship of the Virgin, is a strong argument against its existence in ancient times. Her name was well known to them, and they readily adopted the calumnies invented by the Jews to blacken her character. Yet, with all their abuse of the Christians for worshipping Christ, a man, no accusation of worship paid to His Mother is to be found. The impossibility of such an omission on the part of the Pagans, will be more evident when we have examined their minute descriptions of monasticism, and of the adoration paid to martyr-relics.

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* Paulini Poema xxiv.

† Irenæus adv. Hæreses, lib. iii. c. 33., and lib. v. c. 19.

In the earliest pictures, the Virgin appears merely as an accessory to the Divine Infant, whom she holds in her arms, or watches in His cradle. She is almost always veiled; and art was limited in its flight, to the expression of as much grace and modesty as could be concentrated in a figure entirely covered. Very few sculptures or paintings of this description were executed before the Council of Ephesus in 431, and perhaps not a single one before the year 350.

The conventional type thus timidly developed, aimed only at personifying the virtues that adorned the character of the Virgin Mary; "that the face should be the image of her mind, the model of uprightness," as Ambrose expresses it.

In the Lapidarian Gallery (if it be not rash to pronounce summarily upon the contents of so vast a collection) the name of the Virgin Mary does not once occur. Nor is it to be found once in any truly ancient inscription contained in the works of Aringhi, Boldetti, or Bottari. Should any exception be discovered, it will not weaken the astonishing contrast existing between the ancient and mediæval churches in this particular. Comparing the absolute non-existence of Mary-worship in the primitive Church, with the inconceivable extent to which it has since been carried, we cannot fail to wonder, and to enquire anxiously what gave rise to the change. To help, in some measure, to account for it, though by no means to furnish a palliation for the impiety, we must recollect the miserable alteration that had then passed upon the spirit of Christendom, and the virtual exclusion of every thing gentle, amiable, and attractive from the popular creed. Rival factions were employed in levelling curses and excommunications against one another: hell, invoked on all sides, seemed to have risen to earth, and to have displaced the heaven that had descended to bless mankind. The social relations had been depreciated by the votaries of asceticism, till all that was honourable and respectable in daily life was branded with contempt: the sacrament of love and communion was withdrawn to an awe-inspiring distance, and half its rites withheld from the ordinary worshipper. The weaker sex, with the exception of that portion which obtained distinction by embracing celibacy, suffered most. Woman was treated as a being of inferior holiness, — unfit to touch with the hand the sacramental emblem of the Saviour's body: for the Council of Auxerre decreed that females should receive the bread with the hand covered with a linen cloth. A system so hard and repulsive needed some softer element, some niche in its temple assigned to the gentler virtues, already fast disappearing from the face of society. In vain was the remedy sought for in any branch of theology: that science, monopolised by the schoolmen, and rendered more and more abstruse by their labours, was quite removed from the comprehension of the vulgar.

A Bernard or a Gerson may at all times be found able to pierce the veil, and to gaze upon the glories hidden within: but there are the many to be provided for; the weary and heavy laden, who dare not rejoice in the majesty of God, when proclaimed in the "gloria in excelsis" of the thunder, till enabled to read in the aspect of a serener sky, "et in terris pax." For these words, now grown almost inaudible, was substituted the announcement of a new Mediatrix: upon ears strained to catch some re-assuring accents, her gospel, preached in silver tones, fell with strange and sweet effect; a new religion was introduced, containing boundless promises without terrors, sentiments without duties, and an object of adoration that would injure none, while her power to aid was all but infinite. In proportion as the feelings of mankind had been outraged under the iron creed, did they hail with enthusiasm this, which seemed all golden, and fertile only in blessings. It was an unnecessary act of blasphemy on the part of the Constantinopolitan Council to decree, "that whoever would not avail himself of the intercession of the Virgin

Mary should be accursed;"* and quite out of character with the worship of one who was represented as indulgent beyond all precedent. The homage in which she was made to delight, was of a gentler character: "May God Almighty forgive your sins, for the merits of our Lady," was the absolution given by Gregory VII. to Beatrice and Matilda.† Nor has this error disappeared with the dark ages which produced it, if indeed the dark ages can in any sense be said to have passed away in Southern Europe: for still, in spite of Scripture, and of the unanimous consent of the ancient Church, does the Virgin Mary usurp, or at least share, the place of her Son, in the devotions both of priests and of people.

The rudiments of Christian architecture are derived from two distinct sources; the ancient Roman basilica, and the subterranean catacomb chapel. That the first of these may have furnished in some measure the elements of the second, is possible; though in time of persecution the Church would feel little disposed to borrow the form of its sacred enclosures from the structure of a heathen court. The difficulty of deciding upon the question, lies in our not possessing accurate dates of those specimens of subterranean architecture that are either extant, or known by means of paintings and bas-reliefs.

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* A.D. 712. Harduin, iv. 430. The acts were read in the second Nicene Council.

† Gregorii VII. Epistolæ. Harduin, tom. vi. 1235.

Notwithstanding the assertions of Roman antiquarians concerning the high antiquity of the catacomb chapels, as proved by the martyrs' graves contained in them, the argument will not bear examination; for the bones of martyrs were in after-times removed from their first resting-places, and deposited in subterranean chapels. These new sepulchres were covered by *horizontal* tablets, and correspond exactly with the martyr-graves described by Prudentius. According to that author, the body of St. Vincent was washed on shore, and immediately interred on the spot: in time of peace it was removed to a chapel, and buried beneath the altar. It is therefore impossible, from the presence of Vincent's grave, to ascertain the time at which the chapel bearing his name was built.

The supposition that some relic was necessary to the consecration of a church, arose in the fourth century, and became so general, that, as we have seen, a law was made to forbid the trade in sacred remains. Augustine particularises the monks as foremost in this traffic: "Some," he says, "retail the limbs of martyrs, if martyrs they are."* Like stock that had risen in value, the remains, so long neglected, now conferred unexpected wealth, or at least honour, on their possessors: the relics of a slave were a present worthy of a king. The

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* De Opere Monachorum, cap. 23.

Empress Constantina applied to Gregory I. for some portion of St. Paul, even the head, if it could be spared. This was asking too much: Gregory neither dared to touch the relics, on account of the dreadful accidents that had happened to persons going too near them; nor could he honestly advise her to receive so dangerous a gift. Even the tomb of St. Laurence had proved fatal to some workmen, who had accidentally opened it during an excavation: for although none touched the contents, all who looked in, died within ten days.* But the Empress, neither satisfied with the denial, nor alarmed by the probable consequences of the bishop's compliance with her request, pleads the Greek custom of transporting relics. To this Gregory replies by relating an incident which had recently occurred in Rome: a party of Greek monks, who had been caught in the act of opening some ordinary graves near St. Paul's Basilica, when questioned as to their motive, confessed that they intended to carry the bones to Greece, and there palm them off as sacred. "From which circumstance," argues Gregory, "I suspect that the Greeks do not really transport *sacred* relics."†

In the confusion thus created, it is impossible to ascertain the original burial places of the martyrs, excepting of a few that were never removed, but had churches raised over their graves at the earliest moment practicable.

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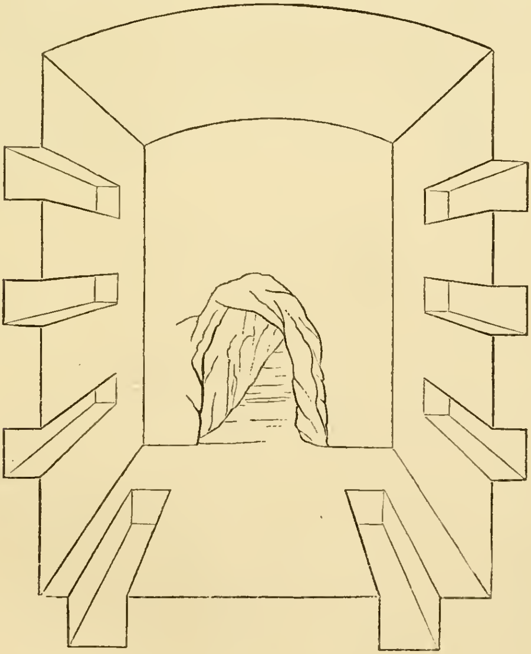
* Some cases of this kind will be found in Chadwick's Supplement to the Parliamentary Report upon Interment.

† Gregorii Maximi Epist. lib. iv. ep. xxx. The second Council of Nice considered relics absolutely essential to the sanctity of a church, and ordered that all churches unprovided with them should be immediately supplied.

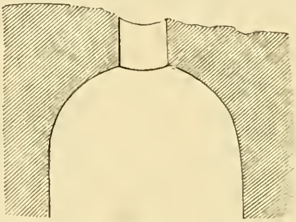
It is impossible to trace to any one source the origin of Christian architecture; for while the lateral chapels of a cathedral, its *confessions*, crypts, and altar, are derived from the catacombs, the windows, aisles, nave and transept are indisputably taken from the ancient court of justice. A short account of the two structures will vindicate the claims of each.

The first chapels excavated in the catacombs were of the simplest form — a mere enlargement of the passage into an oblong or square chamber,



vaulted above, and lined with graves on every side. One is here seen in section, having also tombs sunk in the floor. (Roman Antiquarians.)

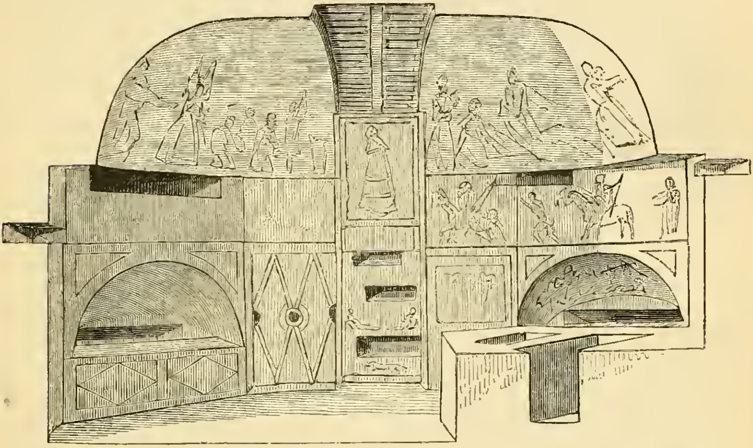
The narrow passage is seen opposite the spectator. A more elevated vault was afterwards preferred, and a light-hole practised in time of security. Although the ceiling thus produced seems to furnish the original idea of a dome and lantern, we must



remember that the Pantheon had been previously constructed, exhibiting the form in question fully developed. Michael Angelo is said to have borrowed the idea of St. Peter's from the Parthenon and the Pantheon; to have, in the hopelessness of producing a new element of architectural grandeur, determined to place the one upon the other, and combine the beauties of both.

The bishops of Rome were not unmindful of their early sanctuary, when released from the necessity of seeking refuge in it. Their subterranean decorations have been noticed by Anastasius; and some are mentioned in the poems of Prudentius. Celestinus, who lived in 421, embellished his own cemetery with paintings; Fabian, sitting in 251, constructed many fresh works in the cemeteries; the tomb of Hippolytus had been adorned with

Parian marble and precious metals before the year 400. Our next specimen of the Catacomb chapel is therefore considerably in advance of the last; the roof being more vaulted and ornamented, the walls painted, and the *monumentum arcuatum*, an important feature in church architecture, freely introduced. (Aringhi).



This "arched monument," as it is technically termed, consists of a vaulted niche, containing a flat tomb projecting from the back wall; in some instances its roof is covered with painting. In subterranean chapels, it is not uncommon to find a tomb occupying part of the space originally covered by a fresco, in such a manner as to show that the grave is of later date than the picture. Occasionally these graves are accompanied by the cup, supposed by the ultramontanes to commemorate a martyr's death; and these cases have been adduced as proofs of the existence of church painting previous to the time of Constantine. But the doubtfulness of the symbols of martyrdom, and the frequency of secondary interment, destroy the value of the proof.

The projecting table formed by the lower part of the arched monument, and the horizontal grave exposed by the section on the right of the above sketch, offer facilities for the celebration of martyr-feasts, which remove any difficulty occasioned by the perpendicular slabs of earlier times. We are now able to understand that passage of Prudentius which describes the Eucharist of the martyr-chapel:

"Illa sacramenti donatrix mensa, eademque
Custos fida sui martyris apposita:
Servat ad æterni spem Judicis ossa sepulchro,
Pascit item sanctis Tibricolas dapibus." *

"That slab gives the sacrament, and at the same time faithfully guards the martyr's remains; it preserves his bones in the sepulchre in hope of the Eternal Judge, and feeds the Tibricolæ with sacred meat. Great is the sanctity of the place, and near at hand the altar for those who pray."

The rudiments of this custom, though perhaps amounting to nothing more than prayer and thanksgiving at the grave, are to be found in the second century. In 167 wrote the church of Smyrna: "We buried the body of Polycarp in a suitable place, and there, when we are able, we shall meet with joy and exultation: and may the Lord grant us to celebrate the birthday of His martyr, both in memory of those

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* Hymn for Hippolytus' day.

who have already fought, and for the exercise and preparation of those who have yet to fight."*

If we can suppose a chapel, like that represented above, to have been brought to its actual state of decoration under the immediate successors of Constantine, it must be granted that the horizontal martyr-graves may have served as a scene of mutual exhortation in the persecutions under Julian and the Arian Emperors: that the faithful may have been strengthened in their arduous struggle by the sacramental elements, actually partaken of upon the grave-stone. But as a matter of history, this later recourse to the martyr-chapels is very different from the same expedient resorted to by the primitive confessors, objects of the Decian and Aurelian proscriptions.

The vaulted monument of the last chapel, though a great refinement upon the simple niche, was but the embryo of the fully developed *confession* of the next age. In the cancellarium here engraved, may be traced the elements of the modern chancel, balustrade, and communion table of our own churches: or the semicircular round-headed tribune†, the barred gates of the crypt, and the altar, of modern Italy. A sarcophagus containing bones is seen at the back of the vault, separated from the open space in front by a cancellated slab of marble,

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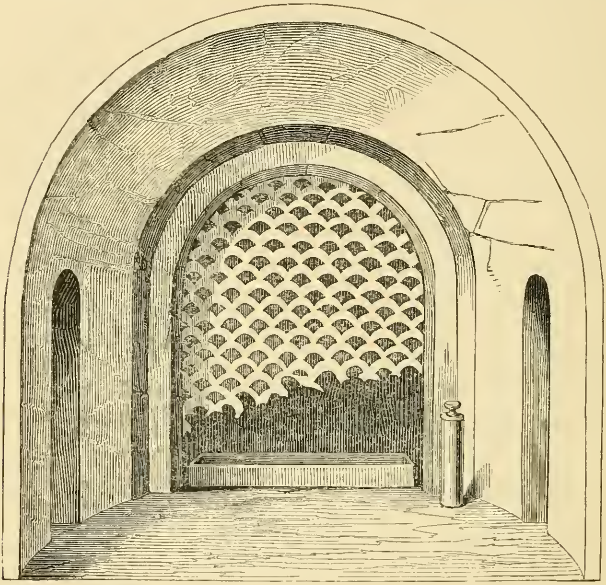
* Eusebii Hist. Eccles., lib. iv. cap. 14.

† The baldacchino is not here specified, on the supposition that it is only a substitute for the tribune, in situations where the high altar is removed from its natural place. The *confession* is so called from being the burial place of the *confessor*, or martyr.



now broken. A cup is placed upon the pedestal on the right. (Aringhi, Boldetti, &c.)

Having traced the development of the catacomb system of church building, we must go back a few centuries to the origin of the basilica, without which we cannot account for more than half the present system of ecclesiastical architecture. A short time before the introduction of Christianity, the Imperial palaces of Rome had been provided with courts for the administration of justice. These basilicæ, as they were termed, increased to the number of eighteen, and were afterwards devoted to general business. Their interior displayed a central avenue, flanked by two lateral aisles, and terminated by a transept. The male and female candidates for justice filled the aisles, the separation of the sexes being preserved by the central nave.* There was also a semicircular swelling of the transept opposite to the nave, occupied by the judge and his officers: to this recess was given the name of Absis, in Greek, and Tribuna in Latin; the last derived from the ancient office of Tribune, and furnishing the original of the modern appellation, Tribunal.

The transept of the imperial Basilica was raised a few steps higher than the nave; and the seats for magistrates, sometimes disposed in a semicircular form, were rather above both. It requires no great stretch of imagination to trace in this arrangement the outline of a Christian church; the building, originally intended for the protection of right, and the enforcement of justice, was naturally applied to the preaching of eternal truth and righteousness; and its name, Basilica, a kingly hall, was well suited to the temple of the King of kings. "The bishop," observes Hope, "might find in the raised absis his fit seat, called upon, as he was, to *oversee* his flock, and the clergy who were ranged on either side." But what seemed most of all to warrant the appropriation of the building, was the discovery, made at the time, that the transept and nave of the heathen edifice formed a cross, and had through past ages uttered a mute prophecy of the future triumph of the Crucified. It is said that many of the Pagans were profoundly impressed by this coincidence, and disposed thereby to receive Christianity. Nor is the fact less probable than that which is related of the Alexandrians, that on the destruction of the Serapion, and revelation of its mysteries, many changed their religion in consequence of finding the cross among the Egyptian symbols: such trifles have weight with superstitious minds.

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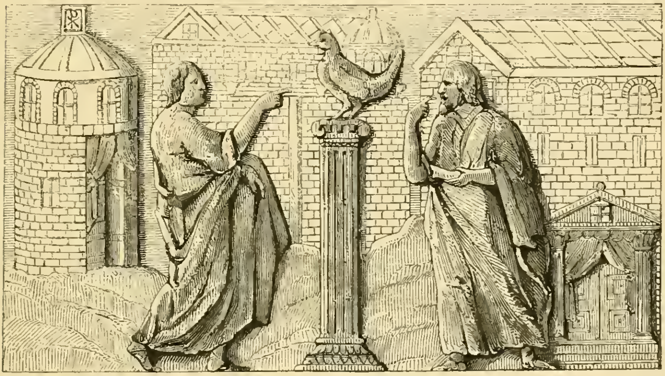
* See on this subject articles in Bunsen's Rome, and Hope's Essays on Architecture.

The building, once devoted to the purposes of Christian worship, left little scope for the talents of its new possessors in the way of alteration. To transfer to the absis the hallowed associations of the monumentum arcuatum; to partition off part of the nave for a choir; to roof over the central aisle for the convenience of worshippers, and to erect pulpits in places whence the voice could reach every part of the audience,—taxed but lightly the feeble invention of the fourth century. The entire edifice, somewhat resembling a magnificent barn, bore no manner of similitude to the Pagan temple: bare walls without, in place of columns; a flat wooden roof and regular windows, in the room of an unbroken enclosure favourable to the artifices of divination: these peculiarities must have obviated every objection to the secular origin of the building that the most uncompromising enemies of idolatry could suggest.

We may safely take as a specimen of church architecture belonging to the times of the catacombs, the basilica sculptured on a sarcophagus, actually discovered in them, and now deposited in the Vatican library.

The date of this curious work is decided by its details. The beardless countenance of our Saviour denotes a time previous to the general adoption of the more aged type; and the basilica, seen in the back-ground, indicates an epoch somewhat later than that of Constantine. The symbolic introduction of the cock, on an Ionic pillar placed between the figures, belongs to the hieroglyphic school of design then prevalent: while the gesture of St. Peter, exactly resembling that of a modern Italian peasant, displays an imitation of nature superior to the general state of art at the time.



But what gives to this composition its great antiquarian value, is the representation of a Christian basilica in a complete form. On the left is seen a detached baptistery surmounted by the monogram: the central building seems to be a repetition of that on the right, so placed as to show, in defiance of perspective, the terminating absis. The entrance door beyond the figure of St. Peter is furnished with vails, a custom of which traces are still preserved in Italy. According to the Council of Narbonne, it was the duty of the inferior clergy to raise these vails for the bishops or presbyters when passing in and out. Paulinus notices the white vails of the doors of his church; and Epiphanius mentions finding a sacred figure drawn upon one at a church door. In the present day, these vails are replaced by hanging mats lined with leather, which materially assist in preserving the equable temperature of Italian churches.*

The basilica here appears in the form of a large barn, with sloping roof, gable ends, and blank walls. All the magnificence employed was to be found within: minute tesselation of the pavement, and incrustation of the walls with marbles, were not thought inconsistent with the most homely exterior. By detaching the baptistery from the principal edifice, it was signified that it was necessary to pass through the initiatory rite, before obtaining entrance to the church. The cluster of secondary buildings that gradually encircled the house of prayer, with the bells and bell-tower afterwards added, belong to times later than those described in this volume.

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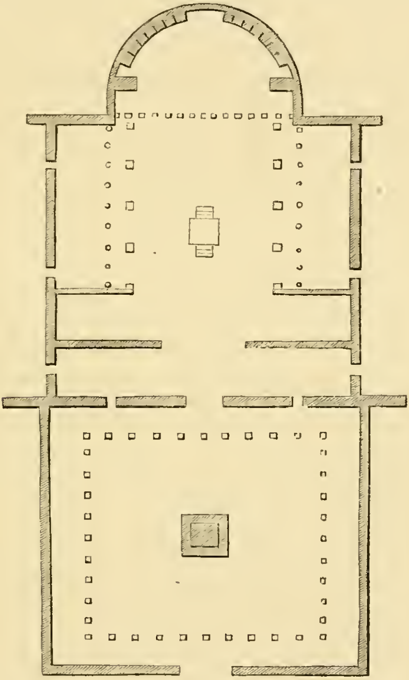
* According to Augustine, vails were used at the entrances of Pagan schools, serving, as he expresses it, to conceal the ignorance that took refuge within.

A plan of the ancient basilica* is subjoined: it illustrates well the state of church discipline in the latter part of the fourth century.

At the upper end is seen the rounded absis, containing the vestries, altar, and seats for the clergy: separated from this, by a railing, is the body of the church, intended for the believers, that is, the communicants. Between the outer wall and the principal row of columns dividing the aisles from the nave, may be seen a second series of small pillars, supporting the women's gallery on either side; in



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* From Bingham's Antiquities.

the centre is the pulpit. But besides the faithful, placed above or below according to their sex, there were four other orders of worshippers, to each of which an appropriate situation was assigned. At the entrance of the square court seen below, the eye was met by a fountain, in the midst of an open space, surrounded by a colonnade raised on pillars. In this court, exposed to the sun and rain, were collected the *hyemantes*, the lowest order of penitents, who found in the hardships of a wintry sky, a mild execution of the sentence pronounced on their aggravated crimes. Beneath the portico running round the court were the *flentes*, a less degraded class of penitents, who with tears besought an entrance into the sacred building. Yet farther inwards, in the first of two compartments before the nave, were the *audientes*, or hearers, comprising catechumens and other unbaptized persons: in the second were ranged the *prostratores*, the third rank of penance-doing offenders.*

Up to the middle of the fifth century, the offenders sentenced to public penance were those who had been guilty of public sins. Private confession and private penance can in no way be connected with the church of the catacombs, for private penance was not permitted until the time of Leo the Great, the first bishop of Rome not buried in the catacombs. What was then only permitted, was in course of time made compulsory, and by a canon of Innocent III. in 1215, whoever omitted to confess annually was excommunicated, and denied Christian burial.

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* The crimes for which the severer kinds of penance were inflicted, would in our country be visited with death, or expatriation for life. The exclusion of such offenders was a public vindication of the morals of the Church, especially in the eyes of the Pagans. "With such an one, no, not to eat," was the apostolic precept, then esteemed literally binding. The nature of primitive excommunication is best exemplified by the case occurring at Corinth: (1 & 2 Cor.) the offender's sentence was, in consideration of his deep sorrow, remitted after the expiration of a year.

At one time we find the single pulpit replaced by two, the higher of which was kept for the reading of the Gospel, and the other for the Epistle. Lights were generally burned in the Eastern churches during the reading of the Gospel, being probably lighted during the exclamation, "Glory be to thee, O God." The custom of standing while the Gospel is read, is the only other part of the ceremony remaining with us. The galleries for women, represented by Bingham, did not always exist: in that case, the sexes were arranged on opposite sides of the building, and even entered by separate doors. The nave, taken as a whole, was also divided into two principal parts: the Narthex or pronaos, next to the entrance porch; and the aula, or place of the faithful, beyond. These arrangements claim no higher antiquity than the middle of the fourth century.

The origin of Christian poetry, at least of that portion which has come down to our own times, is easily traced. The Christians examined by Pliny about the year 110, confessed to the practice of singing hymns: and Tertullian mentions it as part of the Agape service. A few apocryphal poems have been attributed to Cyprian and Tertullian; and Gregory of Nazianzen has left some genuine didactic verses in Greek; but nothing deserving the name of Christian poetry is to be found earlier than the end of the fourth century. To Prudentius, although placed ninth on the list by Bellarmine, fairly belongs the honour of introducing poetry into the literature of our religion: and if we cannot always approve his selection of subjects, we must confess that he has at times struck into the noblest paths of his art. Whatever may be thought of his genius, his enthusiasm must stand unimpeached. Among the best specimens of his manner is the address to the Innocents, occurring in the Cathemerinon: (Hymn XII.)

"Salvete flores martyrum,
Quos lucis ipso in limine
Christi insecutor sustulit,
Ceu turbo nascentes rosas.
Vos prima Christi victima,
Grex immolatorum tener,
Aram ante ipsam simplices
Palmâ et coronis luditis."

First fruits of martyrs, hail!
Whom in the dawning of life's day
The godless tyrant swept away,
As storms the budding roses.
But now before the altar high
Each tender victim safe reposes,

Pleased, in that dread vicinity,
With branch of palm and crown to play;
Though all unconscious of the prize,
Themselves, Christ's earliest sacrifice.

The first line may have furnished the idea of Heber's Hymn for the Innocents' Day:

"Firstlings of faith! the murderer's knife
Hath missed its deadliest aim," &c.

As might have been anticipated, the full capabilities of Christian poetry did not at once occur to its first cultivators. They did indeed select a number of subjects from among those which offered themselves, and by high colouring and exaggeration endeavour to convert them into poetical themes; but even with the Psalms and Prophets before them, they failed to discover that the most practical parts of religion were admirably fitted for their purpose. The whole range of ancient Christian poetry offers nothing resembling in method the portion of the book of Job beginning with, "Where shall wisdom be found?" nor indeed have later writers succeeded in imitating the simple and sublime style of that, perhaps the most finished and complete of inspired poems. But Christian poetry was called into existence at a time when the human intellect was preparing for the long slumber of the middle ages; when literature was almost extinct, and the very language of the empire debased; and, what was of greater consequence, when the subjects most forcibly brought before religious minds were the praises of martyrdom, and the miraculous powers of relics and saints. In connection with the former of these, there is a passage by Prudentius by no means unworthy of a sacred poet. After describing the Proconsular records of the execution of Romanus, he takes occasion to compare with them the eternal records kept by Christ, commemorative of His servants' sufferings: in these lines he has anticipated the "recording angel" of Sterne:

"Illas sed ætas conficit diutina,
Uligo fuscat, pulvis obducit situ,
Carpit senectus, aut ruinis obruit;
Inscripta Christo pagina immortalis est,
Nec obsolescit ullus in cœlis apex.
Excepit adstans angelus coram Deo,
Et quæ locutus Martyr, et quæ pertulit:
Nec verba solùm disserentis condidit,
Sed ipsa pingens vulnera expressit stilo,
Laterum, genarum, pectorisque, et faucium.
Omnis notata est sanguinis dimensio,
Ut quamque plagam sulcus exaraverit,
Altam, patentem, proximam, longam, brevem,
Quæ vis doloris, quive segmenti modus:
Guttam cruoris ille nullam perdidit."

But these the dust and damp consume,
And Time, in his destroying race,
Shall breathe upon the tragic scroll,
And every mouldering line efface.
There is a record traced on high,
That shall endure eternally;
On whose everlasting page,
Nought grows obsolete by age.
The Angel standing by God's Throne
Treasures there each word and groan;
And not the Martyr's speech alone,

But every wound is there depicted,
With every circumstance of pain,
The crimson stream, the gash inflicted,
And not a drop is shed in vain.

Some of his verses describing the tortures of the martyrs, must be left to the examination of the Latin reader.

"Barbarus tortor latus omne carpsit,
Sanguis impensus, lacerata membra,
Pectus abscissâ patuit papillâ
Corde sub ipso.

* * * * *

Cruda te longùm tenuit cicatrix,
Et diu venis dolor hæsit ardens ;
Dum putrescentes tenuit medullas
Tabidus humor.

* * * * *

Vidimus partem jecoris revulsam,
Ungulis longè jacuisse pressis ;
Mors habet pallens aliquid tuorum
Te quoque vivâ."

Having had in this volume many opportunities of observing the style of Prudentius, we may pass on to Paulinus, bishop of Nola, almost his contemporary. A strange mixture of subjects is found in his poems: at one time he is occupied in describing some trifling decoration of his church; at another, glowing with gratitude for the mercies of redemption. Nothing can rise higher than these lines:—

"Ligno mea Vita pependit,
Ut staret mea vita Deo. Quid, Vita, rependam,
Pro vitâ tibi, Christe, meâ ? nisi forte salutis
Accipiam calicem quo te mea dextra propinat,
Ut sacro mortis preciosæ proluar haustu.
Sed quid agam? neque si proprium dem corpus in ignem,

Vilescamque mihi, nec sanguine debita fuso
Justa tibi solvam, quia me reddam tibi pro me,
Et quicquid simili vice fecero, semper ero impar,
Christe, tibi."

My Life was slain, that I might live,
My Life did hang upon the tree:
Teach me what recompence to give
For life bestowed, my Life, by thee.
With joy salvation's cup I take, &c.

Similar thoughts occur in prose, in a letter to Severus: "What shall I render to Him for my sorrows borne by Him? What for the blessings conferred by Him upon me? What for my flesh taken upon Himself? What for His buffetings, scoffs, and scourging? What for His cross, death, and burial? Let us then pay love for debt, devotion for price, thanks for money." Possibly Herbert has imitated these passages in his poems entitled the "Thanksgiving," and the "Reprisal."

Wherever we find a Christian poet deserving of the name, these ideas appear in some form or other. So the monkish poet of the fifteenth century, Jacopone da Todi: "Christ deserved not death, but determined to die, that by death he might remove death. He set Tree against Tree, and paid what he owed not, to deliver the debtors. In Adam fell that life which the Second restored, that life might vanquish death. The elm bears no clusters; why then must Life seek to hang upon the elm the bunches of the vine? 'Thy fruit is none of my bearing: when laid upon me I rejected it not, that my pangs should end thy sin. For this mortal received from thee, I return thee an immortal, that death may blossom into life.' "*

To estimate justly the poems of Paulinus, we must not confine ourselves to the best parts, but examine some of the feebler portions. One of these, commemorating a miracle attributed to St. Felix, is as prosaic as any thing in metre can possibly be. The story is this: a poor man, who had put himself under the protection of St. Felix, is robbed of two favourite bullocks, which constituted all his wealth, and which he treated like children. He prays vigorously to the saint, through whose carelessness the misfortune has occurred: blames his want of foresight in leaving no trace of their footsteps, or clue to the place of their concealment: and demands them as of a responsible guardian, from whom he is determined to accept no shuffling excuse. He even declines the trouble of searching for his cattle, as a step unworthy of himself and his patron; they must be restored to him on the very spot. The saint still forbears to interfere, and is reproached as a party to the theft; he certainly knows where they are, and yet refuses to produce them.

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* In the edition of 1497. Venice.

Christus mortem non meruit,
Etsi mori disposuit
Ut morte mortem tolleret.

Ligno lignum opposuit,
Et solvit quæ non meruit,
Ut debitores liberet.

In Adam vita corruit,
Quam Secundus restituit,
Ut vita mortem superet.

Ulmus uvam non peperit,
Quid tamen vita deperit
Quod ulmus uvam sustinet?

Fructum tuum non genui,
Et oblatum non respui,
Ut pœna culpam terminet.

A te mortalem habui,
Immortalem restitui,
Ut mors in vitam germinet.

"Te teneo; tu scis ubi sunt, qui lumine Christi
Cuncta et aperta vides, longeque absentia cernis:
Non tibi celantur."

Still no answer; the suppliant, maddened by despair, threatens to die on the spot, to lay down his life on the threshold of the church, and deprive the saint of the opportunity of restoring the bullocks at all.

"Ni properes, isto deponam in limine vitam,
Nec jam comperies cui reddas serò juvencos."

In the night a knocking is heard at the poor man's door: he rises in alarm; but the horns of the beloved animals appearing in the doorway, dispel at once his terror and his grief.

We must not regard this poem as the natural offspring of the muse of Paulinus, but rather as a result of the system of superstition then beginning to invade Christendom. When left to his own better feelings, Paulinus would meditate upon the paintings in his church, and draw his inspiration from the subjects of the sacred narrative: as he lingered in the twilight before the fading scenes, such thoughts as these passed through his mind:

Sim profugus mundi, tanquam benedictus Iacob
Fratris Edom fugitivus erat, fessoque sacrandum
Supponam capiti lapidem, Christoque quiescam.
Sit mihi castus amor, sit et horror amoris iniqui,
Carnis et illecebras velut inviolatus Joseph
Effugiam, vinclis exuto corpore, liber
Criminis, et spolium mundi carnale relinquam.
Tempus enim longè fieri complexibus: instat
Summa dies: prope jam Dominus; jam surgere somno
Tempus, et ad Domini pulsum vigilare paratos.

Like blest Jacob may I live,
From the world a fugitive:
Find a Rock beside my bed,
Where may rest my weary head:
Grant me to repose on Thee,
Christ, to all eternity.

May I live like Joseph pure;
May no snares my heart allure:
But immaculate as he,
Let me from temptation flee;
Linger not to count the cost,
Though my all on earth be lost.

Let me each short hour redeem
From death's slumber; lest my dream
End but with salvation's day,
All too late to watch and pray.
Lest the Lord, a friend no more,
Knock in judgment at the door.

This passage is among the earliest Christian poetry that may strictly be called devotional. The reflection on Isaac's sacrifice contains an idea often since repeated:

> "Hostia viva Deo tanquam puer offerar Isaac,
> Et mea ligna gerens, sequar almum sub cruce patrem."

May I, like the youthful Isaac, be offered to God a living sacrifice, and bearing my own wood, follow my Holy Father, beneath the cross.

CONCLUSION.

"They sought out many inventions." Eccles. vii. 29.

THAT a general change had passed upon the exterior of the Roman Church during its occupation of the Catacombs, is evident from the descriptions left by contemporary Christian writers. If further proof be wanting, it is easily obtained by comparing with each other the calumnies of Pagans at different epochs, in which we have not only a forcible, though rudely executed, picture of primitive Christianity, but also an argument against the antiquity of many customs and observances, concerning which an entire silence was maintained by them.

The earliest accusations brought against the Christians were levelled principally at their obstinate adherence to their religion, and refusal to sacrifice to idols. Pliny described them as meeting together to worship Christ, to sing hymns, and to partake of a social meal: their morals were represented as pure, their opinions as simply opposed to the religion of the state. The same objections were urged afresh from time to time, with such additions as the malice of the heathen could invent, principally in relation to the supposed immorality of the Agape.

If we follow in chronological order the accusations brought against them from that time downwards, we shall find little or no variation till the middle of the fourth century; after which the character of the Pagan taunts suddenly changes, and a torrent of ridicule, different from all that had been formerly let loose upon Christianity, assails the votaries of monachism and saint-worship. At first, Christians are accused of Christianity, that is, of worshipping Christ. Beginning with Celsus, about A. D. 150, we find this reproach: "After an infamous life, and a most wretched death, you have made a god of him: how much worthier of that honour ought you to consider Jonah under his gourd, or Daniel coming unharmed out of the den of lions, and others still more wonderful?" Twenty years later, Lucian, in his ironical way, describes the Christians as "worshipping that great man who was crucified in Palestine, and who brought to life the new religion."*

At that time, to worship a martyr was considered equivalent to deserting Christ. This feeling displayed itself both in Jews and Christians, immediately after the death of Polycarp, in the year 168. The believers of Smyrna must do justice to their Christianity in their own words:

"It was suggested to Nicetas, the father of Herod and brother of Dalce, that he should order the proconsul not to give up the body of Polycarp, 'lest,' said they, 'leaving the Crucified, they begin to worship *him.*' And this was said at the instigation of the Jews, who also watched us, lest we should snatch him from the fire: ignorant as they were, that we can never leave Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all who are saved in the world, nor can we worship any one besides Him. For Him, indeed, we worship as the Son of God, but the martyrs we duly love as disciples and imitators of the Lord, on account of their invincible love and attachment to their King and Master."*

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* Lucian, De Morte Peregrini.

About 207, was written the dialogue entitled Octavius, in which the Christian Minucius embodies the complaints made by the Pagans, with sufficient minuteness to show in what lay the real ground of controversy. The heathen interlocutor thus describes them: "A darkling and light-avoiding race, dumb in public, garrulous in corners, they despise temples and tombs, revile the gods, and ridicule sacred rites; the wretches actually pity the honours of our priests, and, half-naked themselves, scorn the purple. O wonderful folly and incredible presumption! they contemn present torments, while they dread those that are future and uncertain: and while they fear to die after death, are not afraid of dying immediately. * * * They reverence what they deserve" (meaning the cross). "The Jews," he continues, "were an impracticable people enough; yet even they had temples and sacrifices: but these, why have they no altars, temples, and images known to us? why must they always talk in secret, and never come together openly? what object can they have in all this, unless their worship and intercourse is something to be ashamed of, or to be punished?"

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* Eusebii lib. iv. c. 15.

The chief stumbling-block to the Pagans still continued to be the Divinity of Christ, and the worship offered to Him. One of their taunts on this subject has been preserved by Arnobius, writing about 290: "You worship a man, born, and crucified in a manner proper to vile persons: you contend that he is God, believe him yet living, and address him with daily prayers."*

Not only can we, from these sarcasms cast upon the Christians for their adoration of the Saviour, prove the non-existence of martyr-worship in the days of heathen rule; but, from the after-controversy between the contending parties, we are enabled to date with accuracy the introduction of the new worship of saints and relics. About the close of the third century we find the argument still in the position in which it was left by Isaiah, and in which it afterwards appears in the Anglican homilies. The heathen, provoked by the ridicule cast upon their practice, had recourse to the evasion, then for the first time introduced into the world, that they worshipped not the image, but the divinity represented by it. To this the Christians answered with contempt. Arnobius charged them with not thoroughly believing in their gods, since they required a visible image to help out their faith in the unseen. "If you do not believe, or, to speak more cautiously, if you doubt, that the gods exist, why should you feign and set up the images of things uncertain, and by an empty imitation represent what you do not believe in? Perhaps you will say that a certain presence is manifested under these images of the gods, and since it is not granted you to behold the gods, you are permitted thus to worship them, and to offer them service. Whoever says this does not believe in the existence of the gods: he is convicted of unbelief in his own creed, since he must see in order to hold, lest perhaps what is unseen may be unreal. Through the images, you say, we worship the gods: but if there were no images, would the gods be ignorant of your worship, and suppose that no honour was paid to them?"*

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* Arnobius contrà Gentes, lib. i.

So thoroughly was this ground of controversy beaten by the ancients, that scarcely anything original was left for the Reformed churches to advance. Lactantius, writing about 300, follows up the argument. "We do not fear the images," the heathen had said, "but those whose likeness and names they bear." "If so," returns Lactantius, "why do you not raise your eyes to heaven, and, calling upon the names of the gods, offer sacrifices in open space? Why look rather to walls and wood and stone, than to that place in which you believe them to dwell? What is the meaning of temples, and of altars; what especially of images, which are either monuments of the dead or of the absent living?"*

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* Arnobius adv. Paganos, lib. vi.

An incident occurring in domestic life, towards the close of the third century, shows the character which Christianity bore among its enemies. A certain woman had turned Christian: her husband, anxious to reclaim her, applied to Apollo for assistance. The oracle returned answer in Greek verse, and Porphyry preserved the response in his work against the Christians. The story has come down to us by a mere chance; Porphyry's work being lost, we are dependent upon Augustine's translation of the passage. The oracle dissuaded the husband from further attempts: "You may as well write upon water, or make yourself wings and fly. Let her go on as she thinks proper, let her persist in her vain fallacies; in empty lamentations singing her dead God, whom right-minded judges condemned, and who perished by the sword and the worst of deaths."† The heathen priest thinks proper to notice the Church's *miserere:* but of her Easter hymn of triumph, the less said the better. Festus was more candid: "One Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."

Another allusion to the object of Christian worship is found in a fragment of Porphyry's work preserved by Theodoret. The heathen had begun to find the power of the gods not what it had been. "They wonder," says Porphyry, "that during so many years the city has been afflicted with sickness, and that neither Æsculapius nor any other of the gods does any longer visit it. For since Jesus began to be worshipped, no one has received any public benefit from the gods." *

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* Lib. ii. (De Origine Erroris) cap. 2.

† De Civitate Dei, lib. xix. cap. 23.

Up to the year 350, there is no mention of worshipping any person besides Christ.

The worship of saints was first attacked about 362, by the emperor Julian: "Instead of many gods," he complained, "the Christians worship, not one man, but many wretched men." Nor does he omit to distinguish between the ancient and novel parts of their system: "At what you have done, adding new dead to your first Dead One, who can express sufficient disgust? You have filled all places with sepulchres and monuments, though it was never told you that you should go about them and worship them. * * * If Jesus declared that sepulchres were full of uncleanness, why do you invoke God upon them." †

Julian's severest reproof was called forth on the occasion of a persecution which had been set on foot contrary to his orders. The Christians, he remarks, had suffered against his will, though not without justice, "for such misfortunes do they bring upon themselves, who, from the immortal gods, betake themselves to dead men and their remains." ‡

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* Theodoret, sermo xii. sub fine.

† Cyril, adv. Julianum, lib. vi. et x.

‡ Juliani Epistolæ, ep. 52. ed. Spanheim.

A few years later Libanius describes them as persons "hostile to the gods, worshippers of tombs."*

Notices of monks and martyr-worship now follow each other rapidly. About the year 380 the reproach is taken up by Eunapius the Sardian, biographer of the sophists and philosophers. In describing the demolition of the Serapion at Alexandria, and the introduction of the new worship at Canopus, he tells us that "they introduced into the sacred precincts the so-called Monks, men certainly in appearance, but in habits swine: who openly committed enormous and unspeakable crimes; part of whose religion it was to scout all reverence for the sacred place. At that time any one who wore a black dress, or had no objection to being seen publicly in a dirty coat, was invested with absolute authority: to such estimation had risen that class of men, of whom all books of history have made mention. The Monks were also established at Canopus, that they might worship with divine honours certain slaves and scandalous characters, in the place of those gods who are discerned by the understanding. They also compelled men to a form of observances and ceremonies; for they exhibited as sacred the heads, salted and preserved, of those who had been put to death by the judges for the multitude of their crimes. To those they bowed the knee, and received them among their gods; besmearing themselves with dust and filth before their sepulchres. Some of these were styled Martyrs, some Deacons, and others legates and arbiters of prayers and petitions with the gods; while in fact they had been faithless in slavery, and miserably corrected by scourging; bearing on their bodies the scars of punishment, and the traces of their crimes. Such gods does earth produce."*

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* Libanii Oratio xxv.

It would not be difficult to verify much of this account from the writings of the Fathers. Augustine's description of the monks is little better: "Some make wide their fringes and phylacteries, while others pretend falsely that they have received news of parents or relations living in such or such a country, and are travelling thither. And all beg, all demand, either the means of supporting their lucrative pauperism, or the reward of their feigned sanctity." †

The supposed merit of dirt, a discovery not made till about 380, was instantly fixed upon by the Pagans as a fair mark for satire; and if the monastic world did scrupulously carry out the directions of Jerome, we must acquit Eunapius of injustice in his description. In Jerome's advice to Rusticus the monk, we find the maxim, "Dirty clothes bespeak a clean mind: a shabby cloak shows a contempt of the world." He also inquires concerning the teaching of Carneades, who was becoming too popular with the ladies of his neighbourhood: "Does he set an example of luxury and the use of the bath, or does he inculcate fasting, modesty, and dirt (illuviem)?" Jerome to Domnio.* Jerome's complaint was scarcely fair, as he himself relaxed a little in the case of young ladies: "Your clothes," he directs Eustochium, "should be not exactly clean, yet not filthy."

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* Eunapius, in Vitâ Ædesii.

† Augustine, de Opere Monachorum, cap. xxviii.

The Pagan poet Rutilus Numatian wrote his Itinerarium about 410. In this short poem he describes his voyage round the Mediterranean: among other places he touched at Capraria, then peopled by monks. "Now rises the island of Capraria, defiled by swarms of light-shunning men. They call themselves by the Greek name of Monks (solitaries), because they choose to live alone, without companions. * * * So Homer distinguished the disease of too much bile, by Bellerophontian cares."

> Sic nimiæ bilis morbum assignavit Homerus
> Bellerophontæis sollicitudinibus. †

Rutilus describes the state of a young friend who had turned Christian, and afterwards monk (v. 518). "Among rocks which stand as monuments of his recent loss, this citizen was entombed in a living grave; for our youthful friend, lately high in family, in estate, and in marriage connection, impelled by furies, has left men and gods, and now a superstitious exile, dwells in shameful obscurity. Unhappy man! He thinks in dirt to feed on heavenly things; and, severer than the offended gods, punishes himself."

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* "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face."—Christ to his disciples; Matthew, vi. 17.

† Rutili Numatiani Itinerarium, v. 439. Bellerophon, after his fall from Pegasus, continued to wander upon earth in a state of melancholy.

The adoration of saints and martyrs, though not actually occupying so prominent a place in the system of the fourth and fifth centuries, as would appear from the sketch of Eunapius, is noticed with different degrees of distinctness by all classes of writers of the time. Augustine feels it necessary to apologise in some manner for it:—"It quite passes the strength of my understanding," he observes, "how the martyrs can help those to whom they certainly do render assistance: whether they are present simultaneously in different places, and those far apart; whether their presence is only to be recognised at their shrines, or every where else."*

The Church of the fourth century, while undergoing this change, did not unanimously acquiesce in the adoption of novelties so repugnant to its original institution. Good men, like Paulinus and Augustine, were at times staggered by the dangerous results of the new doctrines; while others, like Vigilantius, entered an energetic protest against them. The controversy thus produced degenerated into little more than a personal quarrel between Jerome and his opponents, and no permanent result was effected. Not the least remarkable circumstance connected with it, is the little interest taken by the Church in general in the important questions raised by Vigilantius; although that presbyter, enjoying the intimate friendship of the most pious and distinguished men of his time, continued to attack the principles then entering the Church, almost under their auspices. The little opposition made to him cannot be explained by any superiority of station, for he was born in the remote passes of the Alps, and employed in menial offices in his father's tavern. In such a situation it is surprising that he should obtain any education, or acquire information on ecclesiastical subjects; yet he appeared as a learned and formidable adversary to the impetuous Jerome, who vainly expended his most abusive eloquence upon the "tapster's son."*

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* De Curâ pro Mortuis gerendâ, c. xviii.

To what extent the worship of martyrs was carried in the beginning of the fifth century, is not clear: Jerome denied the imputation of it altogether. Augustine considered the practice heretical: "I know many who are worshippers of sepulchres and pictures."* On these subjects different opinions were held by different persons at the same time, especially as to the orthodoxy of sacred painting. Thus while Paulinus was decorating his church with frescoes of Scripture subjects, to an extent which could scarcely be tolerated by a bishop of our own communion, Epiphanius was manifesting a zeal against pictures, which, however salutary at that critical period, would now be deemed somewhat intolerant. "I found," he says, "fastened to the door of a church at Anablatha, a veil, dyed and painted, and displaying a likeness either of Christ, or of some saint (for I do not exactly remember whose it was): seeing then the image of a man exposed to view in the church of Christ, against the authority of Scripture, I tore the curtain, and advised those who kept that place to wrap in it the body of some poor man for burial." This happened about 410.†

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* The character of Vigilantius has generally been made the sport of party-feeling and misrepresentation. In imitation of Jerome's invectives, the Romanists have spared no pains to vilify him: their arguments were demolished by Bayle, who seems to have written on the subject chiefly for the pleasure of confuting his old opponents. Mosheim naturally took the part of Vigilantius, and supported his opinion by the authority of Bayle. This was sufficient to determine Milner to the opposite side, and to set him against the "man whom Mosheim scruples not to call the good Vigilantius. He quotes," continues Milner, "Bayle's Dictionary, whence I gather that the presbyter before us was agreeable to that self-conceited sceptic." (History of the Church, Century V.) More lately, Mr. Milman and Dr. Gilly have adopted the shortest method of ascertaining the real merits of Vigilantius, by examining the original correspondence regarding him, in which are preserved the few sentences of his works now extant. Perhaps the most amusing account of him is that contained in Basnage's Ecclesiastical History.

The degrees of worship and adoration, since defined with fatal precision by the Romish Church, were not then fixed; and the heathen, even less willing than the Christian laity to enter into refinements on the subject, saw no distinction between one form and another. The consequences were disastrous in the extreme: the charge of idolatry, mutually urged by the contending parties, lost its force; or rather, was effectively employed by the Pagans, after it had become powerless in Christian hands. Thus it was, that although the pure doctrines of our faith rapidly displaced the profligate Polytheism of the empire, the after-conflict was long doubtful, being maintained by a religion enfeebled by admixture with foreign elements, against one that had profited by adversity, and had not scrupled to borrow largely from its rival. We read in fable of the struggle between the man and the serpent, in which at length the combatants became transformed into the shapes of each other. In the last contest between Paganism and Christianity, we find the sophist contending for the unity of God, and accusing the Christian of undisguised Polytheism; and on the other side, the Christian insisting on the tutelary powers of glorified mortals, and the omniscience of departed spirits.*

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* De Moribus Eccles. Cath., lib. i. c. 34.

† Jerome, Epistle 90.

Augustine has preserved a remarkable letter, written by Maximus the Madaurian, about 420, attacking the worship of martyrs. "I entreat you," he writes to Augustine, "not to slight what I say, as if it proceeded from dotage, because I am old. The Greeks, in their dubious creed, tell us fabulously, that the mountain Olympus is the habitation of the gods; but we see and experience, that the forum of our city enjoys the presence of the protecting divinities. The certainty that there is one supreme God, without beginning or natural issue, the great and glorious Father, who is so mad, so besotted, as to deny? * * * But I cannot dissemble my want of patience concerning this great error: for who can endure that Mygdo (or, as twelve copies read, Myggins,) should be set above Jove that wields the thunder; Sanaë be preferred to Juno, Minerva, Venus, and Vesta: and, dreadful to think, that archmartyr Namphanio to all the immortal gods: among whom Lucitas is to be received with equal honour. There are also others, in endless number, with names hateful to gods and men, who, in the consciousness of unspeakable atrocities, and adding crime to crime, have, under the semblance of a glorious death, met with an end befitting a life so stained with guilt. Their tombs, if such a thing is worth mentioning, do fools frequent, neglecting the temples and the ancestral Manes. Thus is fulfilled the prophecy of the indignant poet—

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* ———— "Qui lumine Christi
Cuncta et operta vides, longèque absentia cernis."
Paulini Natal. vi.

> 'Rome swears by shadows in the temples of the gods.'" *

Far be it from any one to repeat lightly or causelessly the calumnies cast upon Christ's martyrs by the ungodly of past ages: but neither useless nor trifling is the collection of these slanders when

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* Augustine, Epist. xvi.

employed to clear the ancient Church from the charge of idolatry. The Pagan accusations, when arranged in chronological order, divide themselves into two classes, according as they were advanced before or after the year 350.

Christians were accused of worshipping, in the year

150. Christ. (Celsus.)
170. The great Man crucified in Palestine. (Lucian.)
290. A Man born and crucified. (Apud Arnobium.)
— A dead God. (Oracle of Apollo.)
300. Jesus. (Porphyry.)
360. Many wretched men. (Julian.)
370. Tombs. (Libanius.)
380. Slaves, martyrs, and deacons. (Eunapius.)
420. Martyrs. (Maximus Madaurensis.)

To sum up these charges: before the year 350, Christians were accused of worshipping Christ; after that time, of worshipping saints. Can the non-existence of saint-worship in primitive ages be more satisfactorily proved?

It has been attempted, in the foregoing pages, to describe with accuracy and honesty some features of the Church of ancient Rome; a Church founded by St. Peter and St. Paul, visited by St. John, and numbering in aftertimes a matchless succession of martyr-bishops. In a day when the Romanist claim to primitive resemblance is half credited by some who might be forward in furnishing a refutation to the assumption, it must be consolatory to every dutiful son of our Church, to find that most of the points on which the question of Catholicism turns require no subtle refinement for their mastery. We may leave to the learned and pious defenders of our Church the nicer questions of doctrine which properly lie within their province: while they, with the reed furnished by the inspired Word, "measure the temple of God, and them that worship therein," we need but walk through the outer courts of the sanctuary, to see how unlike to all that now occupies the sacred site was the first erection of Apostolic hands. The details of one period cannot by any possibility be transferred to the other. To which of the two, it may be confidently asked of the least informed in Church history, belongs the bishop who greeted his correspondent "From Paulinus and Therasia his wife, sinners?" When lived in Rome that Marcus whose parents expressed their belief in his immediate blessedness after death? When was the fear of detection from the smell of wine an inducement with the persecuted laity to defer their morning Eucharist?* When was held that council in Carthage which was opened by the declaration that "none here setteth up himself as bishop of bishops?"† Even the forgeries, to which Rome has had recourse, generally betray their date by the introduction of some mediæval superstition: the "donation of Constantine," a document professing to make over the whole city of Rome to its bishops, goes for nothing when we find in it the expression, "The blessed Peter, Vicar of God's Son upon earth." After this there is comparatively little interest in the discovery that it is the production of a notorious impostor, who flourished about 790.* Other attempts to patch the ragged garment of papal tradition have been equally unsuccessful: there was little gained by prefixing to a canon of the first Nicene council the Latin title, "That the Roman Church always possessed the primacy," when the statement is directly contradicted by the substance of the canon itself.†

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* Cyprian. Epist. 63.

† Concilium Carthag. in Epist. Cypriani.

Rome's pretensions to antiquity are founded upon a vast anachronism; the facts and authorities jumbled together by her apologists, when arranged in a strictly chronological order, tell fatally against her. Judged by antiquity, what sentence shall be passed upon modern Rome? and judged by modern Rome, what sentence upon antiquity? how shall the long-neglected worship of the Virgin be forgiven to the apostolic age?—how the non-preservation of blood and ashes enough to impregnate Christendom with the odour of heavenly sanctity?

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* Isidore, who took the name of Peccator, which his friends unnecessarily changed to Mercator.

† Canon vi. "Let Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, preserve the ancient usage, the bishop of Alexandria having authority over all those churches, as is the custom with the Roman bishop. In like manner, also, he who is appointed over Antioch: and in all the provinces let the seniority of the churches be maintained." Harduin, t. i. col. 432.

O infantine and undeveloped religion, without mythology, shrines, or images: taught by a priesthood ingloriously moral, unqualified to "create their Creator," and sharing the cup of blessing with the meanest of the laity! Vainly was St. Paul suffered to witness the glories of the third heaven, debarred from their ultimate enjoyment by the decree, "If any one shall say, that justifying faith is none other than a trust in the Divine mercy forgiving our sins for Christ's sake, or that it is that trust alone by which we are justified, let him be accursed."*

The assumptions of Rome during the middle ages were, in the general ignorance of literary criticism, supported by the fabrication of fictitious works, professing to be the constitutions and decretals of early popes. This artifice has been so completely exposed by the antiquarian knowledge of the last few centuries, as to unmask the older forgeries, and effectually to prevent the perpetration of new. Accordingly the defence set up by Romanist writers has been in some measure changed: we hear less and less of the consent of antiquity, and more and more of a certain development of Christianity during successive ages. We may hail with pleasure this new apology, as it virtually surrenders the ground long contested between the Reformed and Tridentine Churches. Fairly granting that the papacy did not exist in the time of the Antonines, our opponents maintain that it inevitably arises out of the episcopacy established by the apostles. But it needs a bold imagination to trace, in the institutions of the first three centuries, the essential elements of purgatory, transubstantiation, relic-worship, and the adoration of the Virgin Mary; or in the scrupulous attachment to the letter of Scripture observable in the early Church, the suppression, however ingeniously contrived, of the second commandment.*

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* Council of Trent, session vi., canon 12.

Nor is there in the inspired Word any reference to the future development of new mysteries. St. Paul did indeed notice a certain mystery even then beginning to work, a something to be revealed in its time; but with this the spirit of Romanism professes no affinity. In conforming to that spirit, we are turning our backs upon the ancient churches of Italy, that fought and triumphed in the cause of Christ; and joining with one that has reversed their practice, and deluged with martyr blood our native country: which has cursed our forefathers, and retains in full force every anathema against ourselves. We have but to examine the ecclesiastical remains of Rome, to find that its past and present can in no way be identified; that we gain nothing in resemblance to the Church of the Catacombs by a movement towards modern Rome; and that no tendency to apostolic unity is implied in the profession

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* Among the shifts resorted to in order to supply the place of the dangerous commandment, the insertion of the second Gospel precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is not the least curious. In a MS. on vellum, in St. George's Library, Windsor, is the following paraphrase of the "Ten Commandments:"

"I. Worship one God, and no more,
And serve Him both with main and might, &c.

II. And let your neighbours, both friend and foe,
Right freely of your friendship feel, &c.

III. In idle God's name take you not,
But weet and save you from that sin, &c."

> "Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum
> Tendimus in Latium."

To the present Church of the Seven-hilled City we are indebted for nothing but excommunication and the stake; whereas to ancient Rome we owe almost the re-evangelisation of our country, through the zeal of that Gregory who rejected as antichristian the title of universal bishop; and whose "acts are," or ought to be, "written in the chronicles of" a grateful nation. In that auspicious hour, when his eye first rested on the captive Angles bound in a Roman slave market, was planned the most successful missionary enterprise ever undertaken by man: may our Church be enabled in turn to spread the blessing; and having proved its vitality by continuance, may it ever add the yet stronger evidence of life — extension.

LAVS·DEO

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